IRELAND

CONTROVERSY

I

1796

Joan
Feisenberger

Sitem

A

LETTER

TO

GEORGE STEEVENS, ESQ.

CONTAINING

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION

OF THE

PAPERS OF SHAKSPEARE;

PUBLISHED BY

MR. SAMUEL IRELAND.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

EXTRACTS FROM VORTIGERN.

BY JAMES BOADEN, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF FONTAINVILLE FOREST, &c.

Perfectos veteresque referri debet, an inter
Viles atque novos?

HORACE.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

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MDCCXCVI.

TO SHAKSPEARE.

REST, REST, PERTURBED SPIRIT! HENCE NO MORE,
NOT UNCHASTIS'D AT LEAST, IF AUGHT I CAN,
THE HALF-LEARN'D PEDANT SHALL, ALLUR'D BY GAIN,
RETAIL HIS WORTHLESS DROSS FOR THY PURE ORE.
DESERV'D CONTEMPT THE VENGEFUL MUSE SHALL POUR
ON THAT BOLD MAN; WHO DURST THY WORKS PROFANE,
AND THY CHASTE PAGE POLLUTE WITH MUNGREL STRAIN.

EDWARDS.

TO

GEORGE STEEVENS, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

UPON a subject so deeply interesting as Shakspeare, I believe no apology will be necessary for offering to your perusal the following pages. Your laborious researches enable you, in a very superior degree, to confirm the remarks they contain, or establish the authenticity of what it is their avowed purpose to examine.

When a report first went abroad, that Mr. Ireland, of Norfolk Street, had made a discovery so important as the papers of Shakspeare, the writer of these sheets went to see them, and was very politely allowed by their possessor to hear him read them at leisure. In some instances credulity is no disgrace:—strong enthusiasm is always eager to believe. I confess, therefore,

 that

that, for some time after I had seen them, I continued to think they might be genuine. They bore the character of the poet's writing—the paper appeared of sufficient age—the water-marks were earnestly displayed, and the matter diligently applauded.——To a mind filled with the most ardent love and the most eager zeal, disarmed of caution by the character too of the gentleman who displayed them, it will not be a subject of severe reproof, that the wished impression was made. I remember, that I beheld the papers with the tremor of the purest delight—touched the invaluable relics with reverential respect, and deemed even existence dearer, as it gave me so refined a satisfaction. He, who has long combatted with the arts of literary imposture, may smile at the simplicity of this avowal, although he should be unable to refuse his praise to the candour by which it has been dictated.

In what manner distrust first entered my mind, I think it unnecessary to state, farther than that my doubts were accumulated from the reflection in my closet upon circumstances recorded; examining those facts scrupulously by the light of history; and applying to things the rule of chronology, and to persons the records of biography. I found myself speedily entangled in perplexities, and at war with known events.—In few words,

all

all of the knowledge I had received as undeniable, all of the fact I had relied on as true, was of necessity to be sacrificed to the new creed of the recent discoveries. I went no more—and blushed that, innocently, for a short time, I had, in the small circle of my friends, allowed myself to aid the cause of deception. The book is at length before the public; and the very gentleman, who published it, I trust will have no reason to complain of the *manner* in which I pursue my examinations.

The writer is willing to meet Mr. IRELAND in the way he desires to be met.—There are persons who say, "give us up the name of the gentle-"man, at whose house they were found, and "we will believe."—An assertion that seems to throw down the science of criticism under the testimony of character. It is of no importance at all NOW from whom they came to Mr. Ireland—this knowledge at first might have had some effect in *legal* consideration—but, if I am to accept these papers upon credit, I would take the belief of Mr. Ireland himself as readily as that of any gentleman of whatever *property*—unless indeed it could be shewn, that science and wealth were concomitants; and that he, who was "spa-"cious in the possession of dirt," must naturally have the most enlarged understanding, and the

most vigorous and penetrating sagacity. What is not therefore convenient for Mr. Ireland to state, I have not the slightest desire to know.—By *internal* evidence alone these papers must be judged; and if, that shall be found irrefragable, it is of no moment where they have been buried, or by what nefarious process they may have been for years secreted from the public eye, and withheld from the lineal inheritor.

Undoubtedly this subject will be examined by skill infinitely beyond that, which this writer possesses; greater than he has even faculties to attain.—But Truth will collect all the scattered rays of criticism, and those, which separately have little light or heat, by her power of concentration, may carry irresistible force—

"Thoughts that breathe and WORDS that *burn*."

Mr. Ireland confesses, that some account may properly be expected of the manner in which these papers came into his hands—"He received "them, he therefore readily adds, ftom his son "*SAMUEL WILLIAM HENRY IRELAND, a "young

* Such a man as Mr. MALONE would naturally wish to examine the register of this youth's baptism—but I sincerely believe that, by the power of *prophetic illumination*, he was called

" young man then under 19 years of age; by " whom the discovery was accidentally made at " the house of a gentleman of considerable pro- " perty." I believe this young gentleman is under a Solicitor, applying to the study of the *law*; and mention the circumstance, *solely*, to prove how naturally he might be led to search among forgotten deeds, and mouldy parchments, and to carry to his father with eagerness the first fruits of his research. Upon any expressions of this youth, which friendship may not have guarded with becoming confidence, it is not my wish to expatiate—neither shall I notice the name of TALBOT for any other purpose, than to state his assertion, that they were found in *his* company, and that this person, an actor,

> Is HE, whom mutual *league*,
> United *thoughts*, and *counsels*, equal *hope*
> And *hazard* in the GLORIOUS ENTERPRIZE,
> *Join'd with him* ONCE.

Of the honour claimed by the publication, it was thought necessary to give him his full share—the writer understood, that, in Ireland, he declared his resolution to claim it;—and, with the best wishes for his success, he now proceeds to the

called WILLIAM HENRY after his ancestor, who, TWO CENTURIES *before his birth*, saved the life of his friend SHAKSPEARE!!

examination

examination of the structure from which that honour must be derived.

I observe that, in the preface to the volume, Mr. Ireland, with the speed that is natural to good taste, hurries over the instruments of legal acts, to come to the copy of LEAR, which he has given us entire. And upon this subject his remark is at once curious and useful.

" To the man of *taste*, and lover of *simplicity*, " to the *sound* CRITIC, it is conceived, upon " collating them, it will appear, that the alter- " ations made in the *printed* copies of LEAR " are manifestly introduced by the *players*, and " are deviations from that *spontaneous flow of soul* " and *simple diction*, which so eminently distin- " guish this great **author of nature*; and that " the *additions* and *alterations* interspersed, which, " in the eyes of the players, were no doubt " splendid improvements, have not unfrequently " been introduced at the expence of the natural " course of the narrative, the regular detail of

* This idolatrous folly will shew the competent knowledge of the writer in language.

" Stripping JOVE's statue of his oaken wreath,
" To hang up to the memory of a man."

COWPER.

" the

" the fact, and the uniformity of the author's " style; which, whether it is employed on great " things or small, in expressing humble or lofty " images is *invariably without labour or effort*, " and without any thing like *hardness or inver-* " *sion:* These too are amongst the reasons, that " have persuaded the editor, that these papers " are genuine; for, it is presumed, the MS. " here presented to the public must have been " the original, and probably the *only one* by the " author."

When I read this passage first, I own it filled me with astonishment—I could scarcely believe the evidence of the sense, that presented criticism so despicably shallow, and assertion so miserably fallacious. It at once converted the PLAYERS into the most elaborate and polished masters of versification, and SHAKSPEARE into a writer without the necessary ear for rhythm—a man who produced a series of harmonious versification by chance, and lost the supreme ascendancy in his art, from the not being able to number ten syllables upon his fingers. In the following remarks upon this pretended unsophisticated LEAR, I shall fully discuss this point among others.

It is probable that, in the whole compass of English versification, the critic can find no writer of verse modulated with greater skill than the lines of Shakspeare. He fills the ear as much as the mind, and employs the utmost extent of sonorous and majestic eloquence. In his efforts after the lofty and the sublime, he is frequently turgid and diffuse; his meaning is often buried under the pomp of his expression, and a very feeble thought lies like a titled idiot entombed in marble, and surrounded by the graces of too lavish art. Such is the defect of him, who, if he had not thus erred, would have been too perfect for humanity. As the most satisfactory evidence of this great truth, we may refer with confidence to the book of Bishop HURD, who had accumulated, according to the idea of Dr. JOHNSON, all his innovations upon language as monuments to his honour. With Shakspeare came more compound epithets than all our previous writers had displayed; and those in an art which, more than any other, might have been contented with simplicity of phrase, as it had more in its province than other branches of literature, the representation of human passions by the aid of character and action. In descriptive or didactic poetry, language may frequently be found unequal to the conveyance of an impression, adequate to the liveliness

liveliness of the object we describe, or the power of the precept we would inculcate. But the drama is the reflection of life and passion, of character and manners, and these express themselves in the simplest language, unless the poet, decorating as well as delineating, bestow the colours of his art upon the figure he exhibits. So nice and curious is this art, that something is derived from the collocation of sounds, independent both of justness in the sense and metrical exactness in the numbers.—The sense without this garb is not poetry, be it ever so pregnant; and though the syllables should scan with the utmost correctness, the requisite number would never constitute poetry, unless they had the glowing diction, which results from the happiest choice of words in the sweetest consonancy of numbers, combining with the ideas of the poet, selected from character, and vivified by genius.

How fondly have the whole race of critics and readers been attributing this exalted excellence to the muse of Shakspeare! and how weakly have they pardoned redundancy and inflation in some instances, for the prevailing grandeur characteristic of his lines. If we are to believe this new critic, his verse habitually ran into all the laxity of prose; whether upon a lofty or an humble image, he expresses himself at all times

 without

without *labour* or *effort*; and all the *hardness* and *inversion* we meet with were foisted into his works by his own PLAYERS, and considered by them to be *beauties*—nay, where they gave the flow of metre to a rumbling line of 15 syllables, and added vigour to the sentiment, while they compressed its language, SHAKSPEARE, the loose and easy Shakspeare, abjured the amendments, and doomed us, by will, to read only the bald dissonance locked up in his old cedar chest.

But the present is not an age in which this wretched ignorance can find credit.—The labours of such men as Dr. JOHNSON, Dr. Farmer, Mr. Tyrwhitt, Mr. Malone, (and allow me, Sir, to add the name of STEEVENS to the list) have not been thrown away so entirely, as not to have led us to juster conclusions, and to more rational principles of decision. We know, that the greatest faults are on the confines of the greatest beauties—that men partake the general fashion of their times in *literature* and in *dress*; that, at the revival of letters, it was natural even for SHAKSPEARE to be *tumid*; and we see, in degree, this mark of the period he lived in impressed upon all his writings. Let not any blemishes of this kind be deemed to derogate from the fame of the poet—with the true critic they will augment his reputation—they are only the cloudy encrustations of a gem, intrinsically beyond all comparison

comparison for lustre and magnitude. While we lament the grosser impurities of an age, severe in moral and relaxed in habit, let us survey with regret any occasional efforts to gild the wings of fancy with unnecessary splendor.

But such a critic as the person whose words I quote, may be apt to exclaim "Treason against "the *spontaneous flow of the soul* of the sweet "Swan of AVON!—Would you deny this *honied-* "*tongued* AUTHOR OF NATURE the character of "*simplicity?*" What is said particularly is not a general position; and, although I think his logic nearly as despicable as his taste, I will yet trust him with my sentiments upon the simplicity of Shakspeare; and rely upon better discernment than his, to prevent its perversion.

Undoubtedly the works of Shakspeare contain abundant instances of the sweetest simplicity of thought; and many independent speeches may be selected written with the gentlest suavity of numbers and diction; but simplicity is not the character of his serious muse, and his pathos is constantly intermitted by some laboured subtlety of conceit or some magnificent diffusion of sentiment. To say that his muse is never *hard* nor *inverted*, never *laboured* nor *affected*, would be to leave indeed the skeleton of his dialogue in all

his tragedies and historical dramas. His plenitude of expression always operates as a snare to him—his mine of language is inexhaustible, and his persistency of toil produces more wealth than the occasion demands.—His idea like his own HAL

" Seeks for the greatness that will overwhelm it."

To change the metaphor, when he has drank of the river, he delights his ear with the roaring of its fall—he lingers at the source of his delight, and quits its gratifications slowly and with reluctance. I am compelled to say that the criticism which called forth the observation is the only sort by which the publication can be justified; and when we are seriously requested to believe, that, writing English verse, the poet made Edgar say

" And with ADAM-like nakedness out-face
" The winde and persecution of the sky."

instead of

" And with *presented* nakedness," &c.

and that the players not feeling the " *spontaneous flow of a soul.*" which could thus emit the most untuneable quaintness, without the " slightest degree of *hardness,*" supposed they were improving it (rugged souls!) by the interpolation of the word *presented,* when such things are seriously affirmed, happy is the pseudo Shakspeare in his Critic,

Critic, and the critic in his bard; superior is the commentator to the contempt he provokes, and the poet must be narrowly searched in the behalf of SHAKSPEARE.

" He does here usurp
" The name he owes not; and has put himself
" Upon this island, as a thief to win it
" From him the lord on't."—

TEMPEST.

But it may be said by those who receive the *quantity* as evidence, or at any rate, presumption of the authenticity of the LEAR, how are you enabled so peremptorily to pronounce it spurious? much of it necessarily is found in the printed books; are the passages which differ in themselves sufficiently decisive of the question?—I answer I think that they are, and I hope shall be able to convince any reader that they are, from an examination of the various editions published in the life-time of the poet, and after his decease. And this examination naturally divides itself into three heads of consideration, passages altered and passages omitted or altogether newly introduced, of all which in their order. But previously to the discussion, is there nothing let me ask upon the surface, at which the intelligent reader starts? How is the page in its general complexion, in what condition does its *orthography* appear? Is it after any received system, is it uniformly particular,

cular, or does it set at defiance the spelling of all periods, and bring to the recollection the only typographic parallel in the forgeries of Chatterton? Look at the authors from whose orthography the poet must have derived his knowledge of language, and from whose pages we can form alone any guess of the orthography of his times, how decide they? Look at Hollinshead and the poets from whose records and tales he has drawn the materials of his dramas, is there in all or one of these or any other writers, a single example of language so idle in its literal form, so clogged, so confounded by unnecessary letters? Be not alarmed, gentle reader, that I am about to enter into any tedious disquisition upon the subject; but we know well how the liberal use of the letters *y* and *e* tend to the giving a semblance of antiquity; and when that prodigious youth CHATTERTON composed his surprising poems we find him unsparing in the use also of *nne*; but his most sanguine efforts after these "ancient incumbrances" never reached the exhibition of such words as innetennecyonne, innevennecyonne and others of similar composition. SPENCER is an author, for his time even, unusually lax in orthography, and the difficulties of his stanza compelled him to frequent innovations, to produce what, to the eye at least, should look like the termination of rhymes. He preceded the poet and remark his orthography.

An

An instance or two are given without selection as they occur upon opening his volume.

" So well hee woo'd her, and so well he wrought her,
" With faire entreety and fweet blandishment
" That at the length, unto a bay he brought her,
" So as shee to his speeches was content
" To lend an ear and softly to relent."

Let it not be forgotten that some of the plays of Shakspeare were printed while he was in the zenith of his reputation, and it is believed from his own copies. At least the copies of the theatre of which he was a proprietor. Mr. IRELAND asserts him to have been in the habit of bargaining with booksellers for his pieces, to him therefore the argument is valid—How do they appear? Is there in the ROMEO and JULIET, for instance, printed by JOHN DANTER, in 1597, before it was augmented by the author, any orthography like that of Mr. Ireland's MSS. I select,

" Vertue itselfe turns vice being misapplied,
" And vice sometimes by action dignified.
" Within the infant rinde of this small flower
" Poyson hath residence and medicine power."

Quarto, 1597.

What is the spelling of that very play of LEAR published in his life-time also, 1608, will be seen when I come to confront the copies, and to demand why passages, upon which Shakspeare has obviously set his seal, are omitted in the edition of Mr. Ireland?

Ireland? For that they are *his*, and not interpolations by the players, shall be obvious to any man competent to decide upon the evidence of thought and diction, notwithstanding the editor's probability that this is the only copy that came from the hands of the poet. Yet upon what does this most sagacious critic infer that it is so? Is it upon the ground of its gross impurities by which the meaning of many passages is destroyed? Is it because it follows invariably the worst reading where the readings are various? Is it because it cuts the knot of difficulties, which a legitimate copy would naturally untie? or is it because a whole scene is omitted in which a passage occurs that baffles all *conjectural emendation? These assertions I do not desire to be received as probabilities, from their being asserted; I will prove all of them in the most satisfactory manner, and establish that it is an unskilfully executed and manifest delusion.

* I mean that which stands the 3d scene in the 4th act, and to be found only in the quarto. The difficulty I allude to is in the passage, where the Queen's behaviour is described upon the knowledge of her father's savage treatment by her sisters.

" You have seen
" Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears
" Were a like a *better way*."

This has eluded the grasp of our master critics, and, therefore

" Shall dunghill curs confront the helicons?"

It

It is here very likely I shall be asked, what I think of the various *other* PAPERS discovered, and of the BOOKS in which the remarks of SHAKSPEARE are to be found in his own hand-writing? —My answer shall be a very short story, equally pithy and profitable, and "righte pleasaunte untoe antiquariaunes."

A collector of scarce books once called upon a bookseller, and told him, that he had lately bought at his shop, a very rare volume, which he found by certain signs in the margin, had belonged to OLIVER CROMWELL, the Protector. The bookseller desired to see the evidence alluded to, and was shewn the letters *O. C. P.* denoting, in the judgment of the buyer, OLIVER CROMWELL, *Protector*. The tradesman, with much coolness, remarked, that his only astonishment was, how the *O* should come there? for, as to the *C* and the *P* he wrote them himself upon the book, to signify that it was—*collated* and found *perfect*.

COLLATIONS AND REMARKS.

The first circumstance I think it necessary to remark is, that diligent collation of the printed copies with the Lear just published, has enabled

me to decide, that the writer of the manuscript at first used only the 2d folio edition, with such modern impressions, as he might chance to possess—although, in the course of the play, he acquires evidently a copy of BUTTER's QUARTO, 1608, and uses it with so determined a preference over the folio, that he preserves its readings to the absolute injury of the sense of the passages. The folio 1623 he does not appear to have seen. The first proof which is offered, occurs in the bequest of Lear to Gonerill. The words, which we find in the folio—

" and with champaines rich'd
" With plenteous rivers"—

are in Mr. Ireland's edition, and are not in the quarto.

The second instance is in the following scene, where by mistake *Cordelia* is made to announce the approach of France and Burgundy in the folio instead of *Gloucester*, who had been sent to conduct them into the presence. The quarto corrects this; but by the writer of Mr. Ireland's play, this book had not been then seen. SHAKSPEARE himself could never so grossly err as to exhibit the modest, the silent Cordelia, foremost to announce the entrance of her own suitors.

But

But when the transcriber of this play had seen the quarto, it is curious to remark the glaring absurdity into which blind and undiscerning confidence plunges him at whatever hazard. The execration which LEAR utters against the ungrateful and savage Gonerill, is thus given in the 2d folio.

" Heare Nature, heare, deare Goddesse, heare:
" Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
" To make this creature fruitfull:
" Into her wombe convey sterility,
" Dry up in her the organs of increaſe,
" And from her derogate body, never spring
" A Babe to honor her. If she must teeme
" Create her child of spleene, that it may live
" And be a thwart disnatur'd to her.
" Let it stampe wrinkles in her brow of youth,
" With cadent Teares fret channels in her cheekes,
" Turne all her mother's paines and benefits
" To laughter, and contempt: That she may feele,
" How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
" To have a thankelesse childe. Away, away."

I bluſh to present the reader with the *nonsensical*, disjointed, inconclusive and mutilated form, in which, upon the authority of Mr. Ireland's MSS. we are to receive this from the hand of SHAKSPEARE.—It is faithfully copied.

" Itte maye bee soe *harke* Nature heare deare Goddesse
" Suspende thy purpose iffe thou wouldst make thys
" Creature fruitefull Intoe herre wombe conveye
" Sterylytye drye uppe inne herre the organnes offe

" Innecrease ande lette noe babe sprynge toe honorre herre
" butte iffe she muste teeme create herre childe of spleene
" and lette itte channelle rynkles onne herre browe
" of Youthe with *accente* teares turne alle herre paynes
" toe rude laughterree and contempte Thatte she maye
" knowe howe sharpe ande lyke a serpente's toothe it is
" toe have a thanklesse childe."

accente teares are to be found in the quarto. Before this occurs a speech of Edmund's in the quarto of some length which he has not taken. A *curse* seems to be fatal to the writer of the MS. as the following will further establish.

" thatte these hotte teares thatte breake fromme
" mee perforce shoud make worse blasts ande Foggs
" onne the unnetennederre woundynges of a Fatherres
" usse playe thys parte agayne &c."

As it is impossible that either Shakspeare should write this, or any human being comprehend it, if he did, the passage is added from the folio, 1632.

" That these hot teares, which breake from me perforce
" Should *make thee worth them.*
" Blasts and Fogges upon thee:
" Th' untented woundings of a Father's curse
" *Pierce every sense about thee. Old fond eyes*
" *Beweepe thee* once againe I'le plucke ye out
" And cast you with the waters that you loose
" To temper clay."

There is an absolute necessity for the words printed above in Italics, to afford the sufficient chain

chain of language and the progress as well as nature of the thoughts. That the reader of these extracts may not be embarrassed with needless difficulties, arising from the mere appearance of these passages from the MS. of Shakspeare, the following orthographical instances are here presented him.

Innefyrmytyes - -	Infirmities
Unnefreynnedidde -	Unfriended
adoppetedde - - -	adopted
dyshonnorredde - -	dishonoured
unnepryzedde - -	unpriz'd
Burregannedye - -	Burgundy
scannetedde - - -	scanted
slennederrelye - -	slenderly
dymennesyonnes - -	dimensions
perrepennedycularelye	perpendicularly
*helas - - - - -	alas

When these are become familiar to the eye, the only difficulty will be to attain the sense of the passages I now proceed to select—hoping that the "spontaneous flow of the soul of our bard" may carry conviction to every heart, and enable us to discard all the manifest interpolations by which the players imagined they restored to common

* By this curious mode of writing the interjection, one might be tempted to believe that Shakspeare had received a French education at the College of St. Omers.

sense,

sense, passages, which to their limited understandings, afforded no distinct meaning.

I find in the MS.

" Kill thy physician and thy fee bestow
" Upon the *Soule* disease."

This I conjecture happened from the *f* in the folio not being plainly crossed, and the writers wanting the perception of the nonsense he was producing by making it an *S*.

When EDMUND comments upon the excellent foppery of the world, and observes that

" We make guilty of our disasters *the sun*,
" *The moon, the stars*, as if we were villains
" On necessity."

In the MS. disasters are not followed by any consequences, and the verb is left without any subject to which it can be referred, for thus it is given by Mr. Ireland.

" Wee make guiltye of oure dysasterres
" Vyllaynes bye niscessytye fooles bye compulsyonne," &c.

In the droggrel rhymes uttered by the foole instead of *whore*, which however coarse is essential to the rhyme, we find the word *hope* and verse is printed as prose. SHAKSPEARE not knowing the forms of metrical arrangement.

" Leave

" Leave thy drinke and thy *hope* [whore]
" And keep in a door,
" And thou shalt have more
" Than two tens to a score."

From whatever cause the extravagancies of this *worthy* fool, are singularly given in the hand writing of Shakspeare. The words in Italics are omitted in the MS. and the whole printed as prose.

" Then they for joy did weep,
" And I for sorrow sung
" That such a king should play bopeep,
" *And go the fools among.*"

In the passage a little before we have

" Truth's a dog must to kennel while my lady [o'th' brache or broache]
" May stand by the fire and stink."

The words in hooks are omitted, and I take an opportunity of starting a conjecture that we should read for Lady Brach, *Lady o'th Broach* [Turnspit]

" *Foole.*
" The hedge sparrow fed the cuckow so long
" That it had its head bit off by its younge."

The quarto and Mr. Ireland's MS. read

" Thatte itte hadde the heade be itte younge."

Lear's train in the MS. is made to consist of

" *Four* hundreth knyghtes and squires"

although

although the number *one* hundred is sufficiently marked in the course of the play.

The following passage is an additional proof of the clearness of this, which is called the original copy of the play—The common reading is

" Such smiling rogues
" Like rats, oft bite the holy cords in twain
" Which are too intrinse t' unloose: smooth every passion
" That in the natures of their lords rebels."

which our miraculous MS. displays in the following unclouded light.

" Like ratts nibble those cordes inne twaine,
" Which are toe intrenche ande loosen everye smooth passyon."

For with *presented* nakedness, &c. we are favoured with the following

" And with *A-skew-ble* nakedness outface
" The wynde ande persecutinne of the skye."

If this be meant for nature, it is dissonance! if it be given as an improved reading, it is folly. When Adam was naked, the elements were yet unagitated; and when creation was punished for his transgression, Adam was no longer naked.

Edgar, a few lines below, purposes to conceal himself, and he therefore adds to the squalid habit of the madman and beggar, the prayers, the lunatic banns, and ejaculations of the characters.

" Poor

" Poor Turlygood, poor Tom!
" That's something yet—Edgar I nothing am."

This it is to have players for the editors of an author's works. Shakspeare, says Mr. Ireland, gave it,

" Poore Tom, poore Edgarre.
" Thatte innedeede is somethynge. I amme nothynge."

Meaning thus most sagaciously to use that name in his exclamations, which must alarm the suspicions of any, who might be commissioned to seek him; and who, knowing, that from any port it was impossible he should escape, would be confident that in disguize he lurked in some part of the kingdom.

When the reader has read the following awful address, he will hardly away with what must follow it (not Heaven knows for preferment).

" Let the great gods
" That keep this dreadful pudder o'er our heads,
" Find out their enemies now. Tremble thou wretch,
" That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
" Unwhipped of justice; Hide thee, thou bloody hand;
" Thou perjur'd, and thou simular of virtue
" That art incestuous: Caitiff, to pieces shake,
" That under covert and convenient seeming
" Has practis'd on man's life! Close pent-up guilts,
" Rive your concealing continents, and cry
" These dreadful summoners grace. I am a man
" More sinn'd against than sinning."

[Folio 1632.]

From Mr. IRELAND's Lear.

" Lette the greate Gods, who thunderre oere oure heades
" Fynde theyre Enemyes nowe tremble thou wretche
" Thatte haste withinne thee undyvulgedde Crymes
" Hyde thee thou bloudye hande unwhypte of Justice
" Thou Sycophante dissemblerre of Virtewe
" Ande convenyente seemynge thatte practysedde
" Close pente uppe guiltes onne credulouse Mens lives
" Rive youre concealedde Centerres ande begge grace
" Offe these Greate ande thunderynge Summonerres
" Butte I amme oune more synnd agaynste thenne synnyng"

For the comprehensive precept of Edgar

" Keep thy word justly; swear not; commit not with man's sworne spouse;"

The book of SHAKSPEARE, the only one that ever came from his hand; every line of which he had numbered to prevent the slightest augmentation or decrease, reads the following sound morality:

" Keepe thye worde ande whore with man's sworne spouse."

But enough and more than enough of such palpable proof.

" Never count the turns—One and a million!"

This has in plain truth been the most irksome part of my task. with the readings of the best copies in my remembrance to read the new publication was a source of astonishment and laughter. To extract the passages with fidelity has been an employment of difficulty and disgust, de-

deformed as they are by almost impossible errors, and a vicious and fantastic orthography, with not a point (there is not even so much as a period) to conduct the disunited members of sentences to any junction; with verse perpetually distended into prose by the intrusion of expletives and the disarrangement of words; and every species of perversion which the most determined enemy to sense and poetry could have the ingenuity to inflict.

Let us hear no more of the carelessness of HEMINGE and CONDELL!—They were compared with the poet himself, the correctest writers, the most judicious critics, the most elegant of poets. For one absurdity in their copy he has left an hundred in his MSS. and if we regard versification as a merit, it must be severed from this spontaneous writer.—His Lear contains no three consecutive lines, that possess any metrical exactness—all those melodious passages which have rung upon the ear of Fancy, and shall (in despite of imposture) continue to vibrate there while the nature of man is endowed with poetic feelings, if we believe in this WORM, this *irregular*, *writhing*, and *creeping* inhabitant of the *old* TRUNK, are the innovations of the ignorant, the scorn of the sound critic, and are abjured in the solemn

testament of SHAKSPEARE. There is no doubt, that what strikes this writer, will have occurred to the reflection of every judicious reader, namely, the natural and necessary difference between a BOOK, printed hastily from playhouse copies, or peacemeal parts belonging to actors, and the genuine and originating MSS. of the poet. One of the most common press errors arises from the compositor's eye glancing below the following line to that he has composed in what is termed the copy;—hence lines are frequently omitted, hemistichs are wrongly connected; and if we add to this consideration the certainty that common work was never corrected by the author, and that probably a corrector of the press was a character hardly known in a printing office, we have an easy solution of the causes which produced the errors of our early plays. They were printed in haste, and sold probably for less than sixpence. But how arose the palpable errors I have exhibited in the manuscript? Was the meaning clouded in the mind of the greatest genius and most pregnant observer of Nature? Was it his hurry to produce that perplexed his reasoning, defeated its result, perverted his axioms, and mutilated his verse? Was he contented to give to the recitation of skiful actors what no skill could render intelligible to

the

the shrewdest philologist?—Or are we to imagine, that there existed in the manuscript performances of his time certain comprehensive symbols, by which a *word* called up the *idea*, to which it was a clue, and *obscurity* became the beacon to guide them to *clearness?* But the MS. I am reviewing is not the penmanship of idleness. Half the labour bestowed upon unnecessary *letters*, would have cleared away the mystery and and ambiguity of the *meaning*. So much, admitting it for a moment to be genuine—but, whether it be like the MSS. of that time or not, I have I think demonstrated, that its errors are not such as the pen is subject to; but that they are rather those of the press, though certainly more flagrant than those of any press of which we have yet cognizance.

The progress of discussion now leads me to consider those passages of very eminent merit which are not to be found in the book of Mr. Ireland—to determine between us whether, as Mr. Ireland affirms, they are interpolations of the players, or, as this writer confidently maintains they are, authentically Shakspeare's, shall be the task of any man at all conversant with the poet's general manner.

Bastard. " I promise you the effects he writ of, succeed unhappily, as of unnaturalness betweene the childe and the parent, death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient *armies, divisions in state, menaces and maledictions against king and nobles, needlesse diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what.

Edg. " How long have you bin in a sectary astronomical?"

Quarto, 1608.

This passage is not in the folio editions, and for the reasons above given, not in the *MS.* which grounded upon the 2d folio, rarely differs in the progress of the dialogue; but frequently, indeed, by the interspersion of epithets culled out of the quarto.

I have before referred in a note to the 3d scene of the 4th act, which is totally omitted in the folio and the MS. and which could only have been cut out by the players to quicken the action, for, to understand it, the insertion is indispensably necessary, as otherwise the return of the King of France to his own country is left unaccounted for. I have now merely to reprint the passages before quoted and some which follow them—nor shall I apologize for the doing so; they are as worthy of our divine poet as any thing in the play.

* Read *amities*.

Kent.

Kent. " Did your letters pierce the queen to any demonstra-
" tions of grief?
Gent. " Ay, Sir; she took them, read them in my presence;
" And now and then an ample tear trill'd down
" Her delicate cheek: it seem'd, she was a Queen
" Over her passion; who, most rebel-like,
" Sought to be King o'er her.
Kent. " O, then it mov'd her.
Gent. " Not to a rage: patience and sorrow strove
" Who shou'd express her goodliest. You have seen
" Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears
" Were like a better day: Those happy smiles,
" That play'd on her ripe lip, seem'd not to know
" What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence,
" As pearls from diamonds dropp'd."

After her natural and passionate exclamations upon the inhumanity of her sisters, with a stroke of transcendant pathos, which can be named only, as Theobald has observed, with the action of *Joseph* in sacred writ—

" There she shook
" The holy water from her heavenly eyes,
" And clamour moisten'd; *then away she started*
" *To deal with grief alone.*"

He who can believe that these lines are interpolations by the players falsely deemed beauties, and tending to confuse the detail of the action, is a worthy convert to the Shakspeare MSS. for he has neither taste in sentiment, nor discernment in composition.

The

The only remaining branch of this enquiry is devoted to a few very bold and hazardous interpolations, which it is humbly conceived by this writer were never seen by Shakspeare, and are yet found in the present publication—from whom they came the reader for himself will "gather "and surmise."

Lear. "Tomm Tomm where dydst steale thyne Adam's Coate"

MARK THE ANSWER.

Edg. "Fromme mye childe anne shedde notte give itte mee
Lear. "A goode Thefte a good Thefte—welle sayde Tomm"

The following splendid addition to the description of Dover Cliff is much too *musical* and apposite to be omitted on the present search after beauties.

Glo. "Butte ist soe have I fallenne or naye
Edg. "Aye formme thys Cliffe thys wonder ò Nature
"Whose chalkye sydes garde thys oure sacredde Isle
"Gaynste the rude Sea that dothé inne cholerre
"Rage foame ande spende itteselfe tylle itte comme toe
"nothynge"

A little on and we are stopt by a couplet, which the writer fancied a pathetic thought, and so no doubt it is, if he knew how to express it.

Leare,

Leare. " Ha Gonerylle whatte flatterre thys white Bearde
" Ande whenne thee pooré dogge dydde fawne and lycke
" thee
" Dydst beate hymme oute a doere Bustle, bustle hygh
" heavenne"

Again,

Leare. " Whenne wee are borne we crye that wee are comme
" To thys sayde stage toe thys sayde *shyppe o fooles*"

Mercy upon his learning! He had procured Barclay's Stultiferum Navis, and no doubt his annotations will be found upon the margin of some rare copy in trunks yet unexplored.

When Lear brings in Cordelia dead in his arms —He most beautifully and tenderly accounts for his hope that she yet lives.

" What is't thou say'st—Her voice was ever soft,
" Gentle and low; an excellent thing in woman."

We are in the MS. infested with a childish amplification, and some lines following so correctly in the style of Pistol, that they provoke laughter.

" Whatte ist thou sayst herre Voyce was everre softe
" Ande lowe *sweete musyck oere the ryplynge streame*
" Qualytye rare ande excellente inne womanne
" *O Yesse bye heavennes twas I kyll'd the slave*
" *Thatte dydde rounde thye softe necke the murderous*
" *Ande damnede Corde entwine*"

Instance the last.

Kente. " Thanks Sir, butte I goe toe thatte unknowne Lande
" Thatte chaynes each Pilgrim faste within its soyle
" Bye livynge menné mouste shunnd mouste dreadèdde
" Stylle mye goode masterre thys same Journey tooke
" Hee calls mee I amme contente ande strayghte obeye
" Thenne farewelle Worlde the husye Sceane is done
" Kente livd mouste true Kente dyes mouste like a manne"

He, who can esteem the above lines, or any of the preceding improvements the production of SHAKSPEARE, may possibly give credit to what is so speedily to follow, I mean

" Here endethe mye Play offe
" Kynge Leare
" W.m Shakspeare"

This examination of Lear is now brought to a close. The man of critical judgment will decide whether the writer has proved the premises stated at the setting out; or whether those of Mr. Ireland in his preface are established by this candid enquiry. If the critic can rely upon principles which he receives as truths—if he can depend upon logic which he has never perverted by sophism, he conceives he has established " that by the gross impurities of the MS. the meaning of many passages is destroyed—that it follows the worst reading where the readings are various —that it cuts the knot of difficulties which a legitimate

gitimate copy would naturally untie—that its interpolations are not in the manner of Shakspeare—and that its orthography bears the character of no period of English literature, except indeed that when the forgeries of CHATTERTON were offered to the public. Of consequence, on the other hand, he concludes, he has refuted the fallacious arguments of the editor in his preface, and demonstrated the book to be without the slightest authority, and one impossible to have ever been the original manuscript of the play in the handwriting of Shakspeare.

With this conviction I now proceed with little apprehension to examine the smaller papers contained in the same volume.

Q. ELIZABETH's LETTER

To SHAKSPEARE.

The Queen with great familiarity is made to compliment "goode Masterre William" upon his prettye verses, and commands him with *his* best actors, to amuse the Court at Hamptowne during the holydayes. Her Majesty graciously adds, "be not slow as the Lord Leicesterre will "bee with usse."

This is addressed to SHAKSPEARE at the Globe, by Thames.—The poet very naturally subscribes this important condescension of the haughtiest of monarchs to a young adventurer, with a request that it may be kept with all possible care.

In the outset of my examination, I confess that having a precept signed by Elizabeth for the Maundy Charities to Maidens now lying before me, I see no very striking difference between that signature and the one to the present letter. If it be forged, it is at least a forgery tolerably skilful.

We have therefore to combat this visual presumption in its favour by an examination of the circumstances stated in the letter. I take the last of these first into consideration—"My Lord "LEICESTER will be with us." I am abundantly satisfied in my own mind, that the latest period in which this nobleman could have attended such "holiday fooleries" was in the summer of 1585, when the great poet was just able to write full man, being born in the year 1564.

My reasons for maintaining this first fact are these. 1. LEICESTER, invested with the high dignity of Lieutenant-General in the Low Countries, landed in *Zeeland* on the 19th December, 1585.

1585.—2. He returned only in the year 1587 for a short space, because his presence in the council was thought essential in the important business of Queen MARY of Scotland—but on the 6th of July of the same year, he again landed in Zeeland, to pursue his vain and imperious challenge of military glory. 3. He was not recalled thence until, says SPEED, her Majesty "knowing that "a kingdom which is divided cannot stand," summoned him to the defence of England, then menaced by the armada of Philip. He commanded at Tilbury in 1588, while the whole nation was in arms, and sunk himself to an inglorious grave, as soon as the menaces of the foe were no longer terrible—for in that year, 1588, Leicester died.

In the year 1585, the great Earl of Southampton became a member of St. John's, Cambridge, resided there 4 years, and when, in 1589, he had taken his Batchelor's degree, he set out upon his travels, being then 16 years of age. We hear much of his gallantry at Paris, and something of his fashionable prodigality—he delighted in play, and, as a nobleman, he played high. It is probable he might return to his native country in the year 1592, when SHAKSPEARE coming to town, and looking about for a patron, dedicates to this illustrious youth his poem of VENUS and ADONIS, entered on the books of the Stationers Company

Company in the following year, and declared in a most respectful and distant dedication to be the *first heir of his invention*. It no doubt procured him the countenance of this distinguished nobleman, for when he dedicates the TARQUIN and LUCREECE to him in the year 1594, he professes a "love without end," and abates considerably of his formality of address. I am warranted in assuming, that, when he offered Venus and Adonis to SOUTHAMPTON, it was *all* he had to offer, for he "vows to take advantage of all idle hours [those not devoted to his profession as a player] "until he should have honoured him with some "graver labour." Now then I "close with Mr. "IRELAND in the consequence" and demand, in the year 1585, without celebrity as a writer, and certainly having at no period of his life any great merit as an actor, only newly arrived from Stratford, and possessing no patronage, how SHAKSPEARE could attract the royal kindness of ELIZABETH, perform before LEICESTER, and be commanded as the MANAGER of the *Globe Theatre*, not to tarry, but with *his* best players to amuse the sovereign leisure at Hampton? But the GLOBE THEATRE itself was not in existence until eight years after the death of Leicester, viz. 1596*.

* See the works of TAYLOR, the water poet. And a contract between HENSLOWE and PETER STREETE, to build a Playhouse, in the year 1599, exactly similar to that "*new-ly* "*erected* Theatre called the GLOBE, on the Bank."

The

The reader may now surmise why in the MSS. the letter of the Queen has no date—but I have, I trust, relieved him from the dilemma, by shewing, that no date which can be assigned will any way bear out the facts therein asserted.

To the Receipt for FIFTY Pounds by Shakspeare, which follows, for playing before Lord Leicester, from which the date is [*unluckily*] torn off, the same arguments apply with equal force. Lowine, who plays before Leicester also, was then in his 9th year; but, admitting Leicester to have seen plays at his house the year he died, LOWINE could be only 12 years old—he died 1659, aged 83 years.

His Promissory Note to HEMYNGE, which has a date [luckily] 1589, for doing much for him at the GLOBE, and going down to STRATFORD, is also referrable to the same or some of these tests. His friend married in this year, and it is probable was less at leisure than himself to undertake a journey, not, as now, of easy accomplishment.

The Letter to ANNA HATHERREWAYE is [*excuseably*] without date; it is a love-letter.—

The

The internal evidence of sentiment and diction is the only clue to lead us to a just decision. It must, if genuine, have been written at 16 years of age. The expressions " gyldedde bawble " thatte envyronnes the heade of Majestye," " The feelinge thatte didde neareste approache " untoe itte was thatte whiche commethe the " nygheste untoe God meeke ande Gentle Cha- " rytye," and " the Cedarre stretchynge forthe " its branches ande succourynge the smallere " Plants from nyppynge winterre orre the boyster- " ouse wyndes," have nothing of the character of our prose in that period of our literature, and are utterly dissimilar from the only specimens of his epistolary style which he has left us. *See the Dedications to* Southampton.

The verses to the same lady are worthy of no other notice, than that they are metrically smooth, a faculty he had lost when he wrote the LEAR *ut supra*.

THE LETTER TO LORD SOUTHAMPTON.

The expressions which challenge the critic here are many. The term *Hys Grace* applied to an earl, I believe, cannot be shewn to be the formulary of the time.—The address *Mye Lorde* is recent;

recent; and the most indispensable terms "Right Honourable" and "your honour's in all duty," "honourable services," and so on, never once occur, although they constitute nearly all the ceremonial of the age. "*Thryce I have assayed to wryte, and thryce* mye efforts have benne fruitlesse" is a sentence that seems to have been written by a reader of MILTON:

> "Thrice he essay'd, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
> "Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth."

He is made to say flatly and weakly of gratitude, that it "lulls the *calme* breaste toe softe *softe* repose." To this letter there is no date. His *Grace's* answer has July 4 for the time written, but the year is omitted also, to my great regret. This letter is written in a hand of which I believe the prototype will not easily be found. I have been frustrated in all my researches after the signature of this nobleman. Mr. MALONE is said to possess a legal instrument executed by him, and he will no doubt produce it in his intended examination. To me the internal evidence is sufficient—the following expressions have not the character of the epistolary style of that time.

> "As I have been thy friend, so will I continue. Aught that I can do for thee, pray command me, and you shall find me yours."

The judicious critic at once perceives the modern colouring of diction and flow of language—it is impossible to shew any thing like the above selection in the correspondence of that period.

THE PROFESSION OF FAITH.

My reader will remember, that JOHN SHAKSPEARE, believed to have been the brother of our great poet, composed a paper of this nature, which the industry of the last editors recovered from oblivion.—There was no sufficient reason to be assigned, why the pious disposition of the bard should in so solemn a declaration of opinion be

" Lag of a BROTHER—"

In the volume of Mr. IRELAND there is a profession of faith by WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE, written in the prime and vigour of his life, and in the absolute plenitude of his understanding. He, however, appears so unused to composition of this nature, that he has left us nothing but the peurile quaintness and idiomatic poverty of a Methodist rhapsody.

" I do now in these my serious moments, make this my profession of *faith*, and which I do most solemnly believe." He believes what? And

And now methinks I view the reader expecting and preparing for some sublime speculation upon the condition of future existence—and that he who had touched, and with a trembling hand no doubt, the awful ruminations of CLAUDIO, should bequeath to his fellow mortals the rich legacy of his belief and the animating aspiration of his hopes. He believes only what the whole world knows, that " his frail body returns to dust, but for his SOUL—" let GOD judge that as to himself shall seem meet." This is pious acquiescence, but it is not belief. This is followed by some exquisite nonsense, as modern as " this present puny hour " or the writer resigns all pretensions to the power of discrimination.

" Yet will I hope, for even the *poor* Priſoner, when bound with galling Irons, even He will hope for pity, and when the tears of sweet repentance bathe his wretched pillow, he then looks and hopes for pardon."

" O Man, where are thy great, thy boasted attributes, buried, lost *for ever* in *cold* DEATH. O Man, why attemptest thou to search the greatness of the Almighty? thou dost but lose thy labour, more thou attemptest, more thou art lost, till thy poor weak thoughts are elevated to their summit, and then as SNOW from the *leafy* Tree, drop and distill themselves till they are no more."

The above shall pass for piety, if Mr. Ireland pleases, but for SHAKSPEARE's it will never pass

with one discerning critic.—The last image needs the specification of an *evergreen* to preserve it from the horticulary censure: of trees, generally speaking, they are denuded of their foliage when the snow falls.

To write with levity upon this subject no good man will be able to do. The following execrable jargon therefore remains without a comment.

" Yet, great God, receive me to thy *bosom*, where all is sweet *content* and *happiness*, all is *bliss*, where *discontent* is never heard, but where one bond of friendship unites all Men. Forgive O Lord, all our sins, and with thy great goodness take us all to thy *breast*—O cherish us like the sweet CHICKEN, that, under the covert of her spreading wings, receives her little brood, and hovering oer them, keeps them harmless and in safety."

As to the letter to COWLEY, with the *Icon* drawn by his own hand, the first ARTISTS of the country tell me, they have no doubt these pen and ink drawings are modern.

DEED OF GIFT TO IRELAND.

" Aye marry! now comes in the sweet of the year."—This is a most delicate bone for the critic cur.

" O, if this had been forgot,
" It had been as a *gap* in our great Feast,
" And all things *gone amiss*."

This

This precious instrument, by which we learn that Shakspeare, "in lieu of the premises" of Masterre WILLIAM HENRY IRELAND's stripping off his *Jerrykyne*, and jumping in Thames after his friend Shakspeare, who was near drowning, in consequence of the "*bayrge-menne* having been merry, doth give to said IRELAND his plays of HENRY IV. and V. King JOHN, and King LEAR—but, what is of more moment than his "*defunct* and *proper* satisfaction" it gives to his Heirs his play, never yet imprinted, named King HENRY THIRD of England—of which more no doubt anon.

Upon the bequests something shall be said, and enough to satisfy any reasonable creature.

The plays of King JOHN, HENRY IV. and V. had been all previously and frequently printed—To what use was a bequest that could never be productive?—How did the said IRELAND ever avail himself of the grateful remuneration? But we have something more to say to him. The play of LEAR is also bequeathed as written at the date of the deed of gift. That date is the 25th day of October 1604.—But LEAR was assuredly not then written: its first appearance on the books of the Stationers' Company is in Nov.

Nov. 26, 1607, and is there stated to have been played the Christmas preceding before the king—and Mr. MALONE shrewdly determines the period of its first appearance by two circumstances, first, an entry of the old LEAR by way of artifice, on account of the new play, May 8, 1605—and secondly, its alluding to the union of the two kingdoms in name, early in the play.—Now JAMES was proclaimed King of Great Britain October 24, 1604, and with this circumstance in his immediate recollection, the author, in the introduction of an old adage, changed the word Englishman to British-man:

" Fy, fa fum,
" I smell the blood of an Englishman."

See NASH's Pamphlet.

The play was therefore written subsequent to the deed, which, as written, conveys the profits of it to another. The signature here totally departs from the authentic signatures of the poet. To this IRELAND his gratitude seems to have known no bounds of reason or nature.—He says further on

" SHAKSPEARE'S *Soule*, restless in the grave
" shall up again and meet his friend his Ireland
" in the blest Court of Heaven.
" O model of Virretue Charitye's sweetest Child
" thy Shakspeare thanks thee. Nor *verse*, nor *sigh*,
" nor *Tear* can say by half how much I love thee."

Such

Such was the *simple* diction of the "spontaneous flow of soul" from our divine poet!! He then, in the language of FALSTAFF, "having much to say of that Ireland," wins five shillings by drawing his house on paper. BASSANIO and SHYLOCK in colours, on paper also, will find critics in every artist.

With respect to the engagements with LOWIN and others at salaries of 1l. 10s. per week—I do not believe that any such engagements were then made in our theatres—but that then, as now in the itinerant companies, the actors played upon *shares* as they are called, and divided according to their value the residue after the managers had been allowed their proportion for house and expences. Besides, the salary is utterly disproportionate to the value of money at the time. Upon the term one pound, I have to remark that Mr. HENSLOW, the proprietor of the Rose Theatre, near the Bank Side, kept his accounts constantly by *shillings* until they came to 3l.—thus,

l.	*s.*	*d.*	
o.	xxxxiiii.	o	
o.	liii.	o	&c. See his papers.

In the lease to the Frazers the Globe is stated to be by the Black Fryers, although if this mean the playhouse of Shakspeare's company, and we know

know of no other, it was situated on the Bank Side.

The deed of trust to John Heminge appears a supplement to his Stratford will; however, as the latter revokes all former wills, its dispositions were null and void.—He seems to have conquered, like a good Christian, his aversion to "those of the law" on the 25th March 1616, and to have departed this life the April following in perfect peace with all descriptions of men. His testament is legally made.—The only property Shakspeare recollected then in London was a tenement, wherein one John Robinson dwelt, near the *Wardrobe* in the Black Friars. The only mention of this beloved *Masterre* IRELAND, of whom we hear so much from the new editor, is to be found in the mortgage to HENRY WALKER of that messuage, which is described in the will; it is stated to be then or late in the possession of *one* WILLIAM IRELAND, his assignee or assignees.—He is not by Shakspeare called *William* HENRY, and yet this addition was equally precious; the saver of his life would never by the forgetfulness of Shakspeare have been defrauded of

"Ev'n the slightest worship of his name."

In the curious paper abovementioned, the deed of trust to HEMINGE, he recommends to his care a certain

a certain boy (indeed an infidel!) who "must not be named," and bequeaths to his *dear Wife* 1801.—so that the Stratford interlineation of the *second best* bed with the furniture had not been so bad a legacy; but, with that instrument revoking all former wills, he contented himself finally with not incurring the imputation of leaving his wife *without a bed to lie on.* They were no doubt alienated from each other's love; he styles her in this last act, *coarsely*, HIS WIFE; and, as he had omitted her in its primitive form, the interlineation expresses the subsequent recollection of her without one epithet of endearment. Can we suppose that his daughters had shut out their mother from his house? Or that if she had been *dear* to him, and needed only a slight token of his love, that this circumstance would have been unmentioned, with some superadded recognition of her dutiful attachment and affectionate care? The mention of her, therefore, in the deed of trust to HEMINGE is a manifest and clumsy intrusion of a *fiction*, resulting from an idle wish to relieve Shakspeare from an imputation, fairly placed, of resenting provocation, the nature and extent of which cannot now be known.

The fragment of HAMLET needs but little of our attention. Its variations from the printed

books are none of them remarkable, otherways than as they dilute his sense with unmeaning expletives and impede the fluency of his versification. The orthography in the monosyllables is remarkably absurd;—but compared with LEAR, Hamlet is purity. I find, probably a press error, the same *numbers* on two opposite pages, 2 and 3. But the numeration of lines in the drama is I confess a custom to me perfectly recent;—until the present publication, I remember no one example in the collections of old plays. If any work of this nature easily admitted the practice, it was the regular pastoral drama, by FLETCHER, of the *Faithful Shepherdess*—yet that exquisite poem has no such security against intrusion. But if the practice can be supposed to have been then applied to dramatic *metre*, to prose it was absurd to apply it, in a copy meant for the press, where, unless the author correctly knew the number of words contained in the line, the figures would necessarily change their places.

So much for the papers. I have only now to remark upon a few expressions in the preface by their editor. Mr. IRELAND declares that, if he thought it practicable to forge such productions, they should never have appeared. This is an argument from *his* opinion of difficulty—in that of

of other men, this may be of slighter consequence;—but if we prove them impossible to be genuine, the difficulty is removed by the certainty of its having been surmounted. But the proof of their fallacy in the view of this gentleman places us in a favourable predicament: "We have then *another* SHAKSPEARE!!" To the *possessor* of such treasure, indeed, this can be no dilemma. The muse of Shakspeare, or one equally excellent, will confer the same honour and the same emolument.

But he is persuaded of their authenticity. From his first knowledge of their existence, he has laboured to procure this conviction. Mr. Ireland is not an incurious man—he draws, he engraves, he has a taste for the black letter—his collection is not mean of scarce and valuable literature—he has the patience and the relish of an antiquary. Certainly his opinion is entitled upon this question to more than common consideration.—The difficulty of procuring *paper* of the time, and of imitating the *seals* and *autographs* appears to him insuperable. I am sure I receive this willingly as his real opinion, and observe only how easily we are satisfied upon a discovery which we are interested in believing to be genuine. Yet a moment's reflection, one should think, would be

sufficient to have convinced a person of such acquirements, that these requisites were certainly attainable. Is it impossible to extract ink from written paper? Or, if this could not be done, are there not blank leaves in the books of public offices, which might without detriment be extracted? I will myself engage to procure him more paper of the time of ELIZABETH in one week, than he can shew me written upon by Shakspeare. If a draughtsman and an engraver do not know how easily the graphic arts can produce such trifles as *seals* and *autographs*, I have only to say—

> " His state is the more gracious;
> " It is a vice to know them."

In the course of the present enquiry, the author may be accused of taking no notice of the conjectural emendations of the MSS. which are in number about 120; the reason shall be given. He cannot receive them, because they in the first place are mere conjectures; and in the second diminish the great mass of impurity, which is a grand argument with him against their reception. One of his strongest positions is, that so foul a transcript could never be the original of the author, and that it must have been utterly unintelligible

gible if it were. He is made moreover in the deed of gift to Ireland to abjure all amendments, and commands the play to be hereafter printed from this MS. We are therefore to take it exactly as we find it. There are a few errata, I have since perceived in the comments; by which I learn, that Mr. IRELAND had anticipated any ridicule upon the expression "Author of Nature." This work is no otherways an attack upon that gentleman, than as he appears by his criticism to support the publication upon principles which this writer asserts to be fallacious. Controversy can hardly ever be dispassionate. The warmth of the Advocate will be corrected by the calm neutrality of the Judge——that Judge is the PUBLIC.

Nor is the search after truth an object of slight moment in the present instance—if to preserve the integrity of language be useful, and to ascertain the purity of a fountain be important, to those, who must continue in all ages to drink of the stream. It may be said that I have treated the whole with disrespect before I had demonstrated its futility—and this is true.—I was prepared with my whole proof before I began to plead—it is difficult to repress the ardour of conviction.—A General rarely is able to stop the triumph

umph of victory, until he has written a detail of the conflict.

In the contemplation of the PROOF I have here combined, nothing should be despised, because it may be individually *trivial*—when there is an equipoise of evidence a hair will decide the balance. Upon the most minute circumstance overlooked by an impostor, the detection of his fraud may ultimately and solely rest. Neither should that proof be slightingly considered, which depends upon tedious detail and collateral illustration. Upon the first view these papers are amazingly plausible,—DEEDS, LETTERS, POEMS, and PROFESSIONS OF FAITH "*stain'd with the varia-*" *tion of all soils*," and clothed in a fashion of orthography, which some may think ancient because it is obscure, and genuine because it is unusual. Another and the greatest difficulty to contend against is, that your enemy has, or might have had, the same knowledge of the ground as yourself. But let me be grateful—Circumstances which aided him upon his march, have enabled me to trace his progress. He might have been more circumspect, and rendered detection less easy.—It is, however, probable that eagerness to execute what he had once planned, narrowed his enquiries; and that when he saw the imposing

aspect

aspect of his design, he overlooked the morbid principle in its *composition*.

This essay is now brought to its conclusion. I trust it has demonstrated that the SMALLER PIECES have not the character of the poet's style, nor the manners of his age—that they are at variance with admitted fact, and disdain good sense not less than they do chronology.

With respect to the Lear, I have opposed the fictitious against the true, and put it in the power of all to decide upon the question. In the doing this, I could not but consider myself in the condition of ARTHEGAL, in the Fairy Queen, who thus opposes the creation of fraud to the pure and genuine FLORIMEL.—I trust and hope the consequence will be the same; and *that*, not so much from motives of personal complacency, as for the credit of English literature.

" Then did he set her by that snowy one,
" Like the true Saint beside the Image set,
" Of both their beauties to make paragone,
" And triall whether should the honour get.

" Straightway,

" Straightway, so soone as both together met,
" Th' enchanted damzell vanisht into nought;
" Her snowy substance melted as with heat:
" Ne of that goodly hew remained ought,
" But th' empty girdle, which about her waste was wrought."

F. Q. b. V. c. iii. s. 24.

I have the honour to be, &c.

JAMES BOADEN.

Warren Street, Fitzroy Square,
11th January, 1796.

EXTRACTS

EXTRACTS FROM VORTIGERN.

THE following appeared in a diurnal publication—Their author has been flattered into a belief, that they merit to be collected. They are therefore attached to this publication, as faint attempts to imitate the inimitable, because, if the play of VORTIGERN, *announced for representation, should, in a trifling degree resemble the great Poet, such partial resemblance may be* here *shewn not to be decisive of the question of* ORIGINALITY.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE TRAGEDY OF VORTIGERN.

EXTRACT I.

WE have heard much of this play, and the fertility of the ingenious has contrived to elicit no mean amusement from the testimonials in favour of its authenticity: but any thing like a sketch of the FABLE, or an extract from the DIALOGUE, has not yet been offered to the world.

The following has been transmitted us by a learned friend; and we believe the language will clearly point out the inimitable Author.

Upon the death of CONSTANTINE, King of Britain, while the Nobles hesitated in their choice of a successor, VORTIGERN, Consul of the Gewissens, himself ambitious of the Crown, went to CONSTANS the Monk, and the poet makes him thus address him:—

VORTIGERN.—Constans, this sanctimonious shewe may cheate
The eye that lightly courses o'er the manne.
But thro' the cope's concealing coverture,
The fiery glance of wilde ambition
Flashes its contradiction to the tougue.
O, how mistaken is the credulous manne,
That looks alone for piety inne churchmenne!
There lurks beneath their holy, heavenly seeming,
A fiercer lust of power, than ever flam'd
From mighty combatants.

CONSTANS.—Vaine were denial.
And though secluded by a parent's jealousy,
Deem not I feele the godlike impulse lesse,
Thanne he, who, basking in the sovereign blaze,
Teaches his eye to beare the flame unhurt,
As the young Eagle soaringe to the Sunne.

VORTIGERN.—Your Royal Father's colde and in his shroude;
Your Brothers all incapable of swaye:
Nor see I any member of your race
Whom the sadde people canne preferre to you.

CONSTANS.

CONSTANS.—But thinke upon my Order and my Oathe!
O laye not perjurie upon my soule,
That, vow'd to Heav'n and nothing temporal,
May not encline to your most friendly counsel.

VOTIGERN.—I'll be your mind's physician, and the people
Leade to demande young CONSTANS for their Sovereigne.

CONSTANS.—My better Father sway me to your pleasure.
And hear me, when the Kingly Chaire is mine
Thy counsel is its basis—every honoure—
Yet what *can* honour thee? shall falle upon thee.

VORTIGERN.—I'll to my friends; alle needful succoure bringe,
And either die, or consecrate thee Kinge.

[*Exeunt.*]

VORTIGERN succeeds with the people; and Archbishop GUETHELIN being dead, and the Clergy refusing to crown a Monk who had abjured his order, VORTIGERN himself set the crown upon the head of CONSTANS.

But the qualities for government are seldom learned in the Monastery; and CONSTANS, who acquired power, had not sufficient strength of mind to secure it. The designs of VORTIGERN upon his life, are thus exhibited in a masterly soliloquy, after he has wrought the PICTS, whom he left carousing, up to his purposes.

VORTIGERN *solus*.—It cannot faile—I left them flush'd with wine;
My well-feign'd wronges, and bounteous largesses,
Have work'd me to their heartes, and not a PICT
But thirsts to plunge a dagger in his bloode.
Yet, should they chill their purpose and reveal me,
Such is my summe of influence and wealthe,
I well might brave avowal. CONSTANS sleeps.
SECURITY seems guardian of his pillow,
But DANGER hides his poinarde in the downe.
What means this tremoure?—O, thou murderous thoughte,
Hast thou more mightye influence than thy acte?
The deed's not done—not doing; yet my fleſh
Quivers upon my bones, and this firme trunke
Trembles, as dothe the mountaine oake, before
The lowring threate of the approaching storme.
Hark! hush! what means that wilde and piercing shrieke?
Their rage has rush'd inebriate to his chamber,
And now he dies beneath a thousand armes!
What's best to do? Dissimulation aid me!
I'll to my oratory; for the storme
Will ebbe my waye, and all the wreck's my own. [*Exit.*]

EXTRACT II.

"THE TRUE CHRONICLE HISTORY OF THE LIFE AND DEATH OF VORTIGERN, KING OF THE BRITAINES; TOGETHER WITH THE LANDING OF HENGIST, THE SAXON."

Such is the accurate title-page of this exquisite relic of genius. The former analysis brought the progress

progress of the fable down to the murder of CONSTANS. The next scene shews the murderers bringing in the head of that Monarch to VORTIGERN. He reproaches them bitterly;—sheds a flood of hypocritical tears, and commands their heads to be struck off in London, where the fact was committed.

We are next introduced to the acquaintance of a novel character, a *political* FOOL, to shew the impression of great events upon the domestics of a palace. It has been observed from partial communications, which I have indiscreetly made, that the Fool savours of *Whig doctrines*, and the authenticity of the MSS. has accordingly been impeached; but let any man view the conduct of JAMES I. in the year 1612, when this play was written, and refrain from Whig principles if he can. SHAKSPEARE clearly did not.

SCENE, LONDON—THE PALACE.

Enter the KING'S FOOLE *solus.*

FOOLE.—" I doe much marvelle why Constans woulde be-
" come Kinge at alle—seeing he had neither the valoure whyche
" is nerve, nor the wisdome whyche is experience; nor indeede
" any jot save pietye, which a Christiane Kinge oughte to have.
" He was not maistere of his crafte, else hadde this Vortigerne's
" hedde beene now silente, who gives the cue o'the courtiers,
" and commaunds the ducks o'the rabble.

" I shalle

" I shalle never forgette the sighte o'his pill'd crowne, whenne " the Pictishmenne set upon him. Had his haires been lives " he had beene satisfied; yet I wronge them, for you may " sweare he hadde a poore groats-worthe of haire, seeinge he " was polled so rawlye. His last croppe is a legasey to his " Convente, and we shall see miracles worked with it anon.

" Welle, nowe is this Vortigerne Kinge, beshrewe the chance, " for a Foole wille never be the better for him! Mercy upon " the people, they are never soe safe as whenne a Monarche " weares motley.—You shalle have some wille cry out on va- " loure and wisdome, to begette foreigne expedition and home " pillage; but commende mee to the gilt codpiece and a cappe " with belles."

Enter GEOFRID.

GEO.—" How nowe foole, what wrapped in humourous " contemplation. Art thou sadde at the newe succession to the " olde throne?"

FOOLE.—" Youre pardonne, Sir; marvelous gladde, I as- " sure you."

GEO.—" Why gladde, foole?"

FOOLE.—" That wee have a chance of amendmente."

GEO.—" See you not rather a chance of becoming worse?"

FOOLE.—" Heaven helpe your hedde! marke the wordes of " the foole. The newe Lordes o'the Courte wille stand upon " their courtesey, to shew they merit their places; and the " olde are sette upon their mettle, lest the new comers should " pushe them from their chaires. Marrye if you would have " a manne do his dutye, shewe that others are readye to per- " forme it, if he faile."

GEOFRID

GEOFRID then enters into a panegyric upon the character of CONSTANS, or to latinize it farther, CONSTANTIUS, and describes the manner of his death; his kneeling, and with open arms receiving the swords of the assassins.

" With outstretch'd armes he welcomed ruines breache,
" By which a floode of glorye entered,
" And smilinglye his bodye sunke to peace."

The next extract will shew the arrival of HENGIST, and the address of that Saxon adventurer, the attraction of VORTIGERN by the daughter ROWENA, and the stratagems by which her father grew important to the state.

EXTRACT III.

The last number of these Extracts left VORTIGERN in the possession of the crown of CONSTANTIUS, whom he had caused to be murdered. We are now to notice the flight of the late King's brothers, AURELIUS AMBROSIUS, and UTHER PENDRAGON. They seek a refuge in Lesser Britain, and levy troops against the murtherous usurper.

Things are in this state, VORTIGERN at Canterbury, in a favourite palace, when he is informed of

of the arrival of a band of TALL STRANGERS, in large ships, who demand admittance to his presence. They are courteously introduced in the following scene—

COURTE AT CANTORBERIE.

TRUMPETTES SOUNDE A SENETTE.

Entere, in his Robes of Audience, VORTIGERNE *and his Nobles. One introduceth* HENGIST, HORSUS, *and the reste of their myynie—with the* FOOLE.

HENG.—Most Noble Kinge, from Germany wee come,
And Saxonie the province of oure birthe.
Th' occasione is to tender our assistance
Even unto you, or to some othere Prince.
Custome, whose sovereigne and imperious rule
No earthlye breathe may ere withstande, decrees
That wee shoulde seeke a foreign soile and service,
Our Country's superfluitie cause forthe.
Nor deeme ye lightlye of the proffer'd ayde;
The bloode of Goddes doth flowe withinne these veines,
Grandsonnes of WODEN, underre whose safe guidance
Our sturdie keeles are grounded on youre shores.

VORT.—Warrioures, I needle not spende the time with vaine
And empie salutatione, courteſie
Shoulde stille be founde in Courtes, or they muste change
Theire nature, and that gentle powere ittes name.
Of WODEN I have hearde, the heathene worlde
Terme him slye MERCURIE, the winged Godde,
Who makes the aire his Pegassus, and rides
Upon the bleake and barren gales that blowe
From the farre corners of the frozenne Northe.

FOOLE

FOOLE (*Aside.*)—Yes, a manne woulde sweare they came here undere the conduct of Mercury, they are so sure *conveyancers.* Whenne they sette foote at Dover, they scrambled mee uppe the Cliffes after the muttons, as the goate upon the cragges, where the sweete mosse growes. You had a sumptious banket upon the summite before you coulde take offe a castore—butte marry no marvelle, theire patrone stole them fire fromme Heavene, and not to wante savorie sawce, they whipt mee up the samphire menne as they ascended, bagge and stowage, as they hunge dangling from theire poles like soe manye whirlebattes.

HENG.—For our religione, Kinge, knowe thatte wee worshippe
WODEN especially, who gives name
To the fourthe daye of everye weeke of time.
Nexte to himme wee adore the Goddesse FREA,
Fromme whome the sixthe daye claimes ittes honoured name.

FOOLE.—Kinsmenne, I salute youe alle. Our affinitie is closere than bloode canne make itte. We have the same parents, Necessitie, the mothere of all inventive expeditiones. Whatte renders you talle adventurers, makes mee jestere to the Courte.

HENG.—Goode Foole, lette mee have youre goode reporte.

FOOLE.—Godde forbide; I canne do you no goode—Youe do notte come, as I take itte, on a businesse of *jeste*; and I doe most potentlie believe yee will be founde to be in earneste. Marke the prophecie of MERLIN, Kinge, and perpende.

VORT.—I have considered of youre bounteous proffere,
And taken counsaile of our pressinge neede;
Againste oure enemie wee shall employe ye,
Nowe from Albania issuinge on the land:
And thoughe youre faithlesse worshippe I lamente,
Wee doe accepte youre love with high contente.

[*Exeunt*].

FOOLE.—Here's a holye compacte! This VORTIGERNE makes noe more of a mannes life thanne to counte five, and yette he lamentes a knaves pietie to his grandfathere. Whye was I borne a foole, and thus compelled to smelle oute the knaverie of the worlde! Happie is the casuist! he canne solve alle scruples, and reconcile the only shrewde foes o' the peace, conscience, and intereste.

EXTRACT IV.

The last of these popular extracts brought the fable down to the king's acceptance of the services of HENGIST, with which the first act closes. The second act opens with HENGIST entertaining VORTIGERN at a banquet, and when the guests were filled with wine he introduced his daughter ROWENA, the most beautiful woman of Germany.

She salutes VORTIGERN in her own tongue, with the words so long remembered—

Entere ROWENA, *sumtuously attired,*
Bearing a golden Chalice.

ROW.—Laverd Kinge, wacht heil.

[*She courteouslye bendeth.*]

VORT.—What paragone of earthlye excellence,
Or rather saye, what heavenlye habitante,
Hathe lefte her sphere of blessednesse and joye
To putte to shame the brightest of oure beauties?

Whatte

Whatte sayes she, WOORDEN, bye mye hallidome,
Her salutatione claimes a faire replye.

WOOR.—Her wordes are these, "LORD KINGE, I drinke
youre healthe,
Youre Majestie, in pledge, must saye, *drinc heil.*

VORT.—Drinc heil, then saye I, by your leave,
sweete Princesse,
Thus on youre lippes wee tender you oure love.

The next scene discovers VORTIGERN, with his favourite Minister in the Royal Cabinet; to whom he relates the last adventure, and expresses his determination to demand ROWENA of her father. The MINISTER, like an honest man, remonstrates thus:

MIN.—I hadde not hearde your Majestie soe farre,
But thatte a most usurpinge wonder stole
Discernmente from youre lowly servantes minde.
Whatte counsaile maye availe, (yet whatte can counsaile
Againste imperial love?) shalle be assayde.
O thinke, deare Liege, upon youre presente Queene!
Thinke inne whatte true allegiance shee has lived
For twentie yeares youre wife; and in thatte time
Hathe bless'd this realme with many princely pledges:
The floure of Britains—Bye the sainted chaire
Of holie Paule, a Ladye yette mòre faire,
More meeklye pious and more lowlie wise,
Breathes not the aire of hallowed Christendome.

It may readily be imagined, that talking thus of stale charms and cloistered merits to a king blinded by *passion*, and eager for *enjoyment*, would have but slender influence. Vortigern replies only by a rapturous description of that beauty which had so inflamed him.

VORT.—I telle thee Seofrid her approache didde seeme,
Like the proude swanne's, that glides adowne the streame,
When wondringe croudes do gaze upon her beautie.
She, in her hearte elate, dothe arche her necke,
And bendinge viewes her whitenesse in the wave.

MIN.—ROWENA, gracious Sovereigne, is a pagane;
Admitted bee her charmmes it skilles not here.

VORT.—[*Not attendinge to his counsaile.*]
Her breastes were two faire hilles, upon whose toppes
The dazzlinge chastitie of snowe didde reste:
Whyle from her eyes a holie fire didde streame,
Thatte, whyle it kindled flame in grosser moulde,
Lefte those pure icye summits ever colde.
Yette on her cheekes such flushing brightness spreade,
As the softe cloudes beares whenne the amorous sunne
Caressesse them, and blushes painte the Weste.

☞ Our next Extract will introduce a new personage, VORTIMER, the excellent son of an unworthy king.

EXTRACT

Extract V.

The last number of the extracts presented a very highly-finished portrait of Rowena, and exhibited the King in a state greatly prejudicial to the rights of his Queen and the hopes of his son. We now go to shew the influence of this passion at Court.

THE COURTE.

SCENE—AN INNERE CHAMBER.

Enter the Foole *melancholique.*

Thoughe I am but as you woulde saye a foole, yette I can see how this worlde wagges. Alle is but motley. Youre silken Sovereigne and youre worsted-stocken knave are but variable services, two conditions but to one ende. Nowe is the Courte clefte in twaine like the crowne of an egge, and the meate o' the Monarchie is a preye to youre adventurer. The olde Queene is in extremitie, ande neare her ende; the yonge one has the grace of noveltie to recommende her to mye grace; but shee neither understands mye witte nor I hers. Yette can a manne offer to sweare which hath the better ende of the staffe. How shalle the foole choose? lookye, here stands olde virtue in cyprus lawne—by mye faye, a goodlye marble for a cloystere niche! There stands youthfulle beauty in buffe and brooches, owches and carkanetttes. What sayes the poore fleshe on one hande; howe saye youe, conscience, on the othere? Whye, as none but a foole woulde preferre mortification to pleasure'

pleasure, soe the olde Courte shalle be the choyce of the foole.
Mye olde mistresse wille at leaste be worthe a jeste undere alle
her sorrowes. [*Exit.*

Enter VORTIMER, *the* Kinges sonne.

Howe alle these changes come full-sumd together
Like flocks of fowle migrating to the Southe,
Evn in their passage met by bolder winges,
Whiche finde theire winter temperate and kinde.
Thus Hengist seekes the storme wee shudder atte,
Ande buildes his castle onne oure faithlesse sande.
Howe stande mye rights then in the greate accounte?
A father snared—a virtuous mothere shamd—
And foreign beautye climbinge to the throne
Like VENUS shielded by the maile of MARRS!
The BRITONS soured bye discontente, are fledde,
And none but Saxons now adorne the Courte,
Or rather saye they guarde thanne grace the Kinge.
Mye father lookes but with Rowena's eyes,
And they with murky frowns doe loure upon mee,
Threateninge like heavy cloudes in summers haunche
The nimble hatred of the lighteninges hidden!
Whatte if I flye and hedde the Britaine bandes!
Howe Vortimer! a rebell to thy Kinge!
Thatte Kinge a father too! O wretched state!—
O bosome, tortured betweene love and dutye!—
Maye notte hostilitye at times be mercye,
As the wise Leeche from bodilye gangreene
Preserves the noble partes by amputatioun?
Hence to ARMORICA! this truthe Ile shewe,
A filial dutye in a seeminge foe!
Lette Heaven but shape mye endes!

The

The next passage forcibly reminds the reader of As You Like It.—The scene discovers Vortigern's Queen, attended by the faithful Fool, journeying through a wood—he attempts to chear her under the pressure of her misfortunes.

SCENE—A WOODE.

Storme hearde.

Enter VORTIGERNES QUEENE *and the* FOOLE.

QUEENE.—The storme growes lowder, and the angrye heavens
Doe write theire wrathe in characters of fire,
The blinde might reade and tremble.

FOOLE.—Nay, he might tremble for that mattere before he reade. Truly the lessone is sulpherous enough, you maye smelle out its meaninge. Are you notte afearde Ladye?

QUEENE.—Feare is for VORTIGERNE. The guiltye tremble.
And, whenne the forked lightninge splits the OAKE,
Shrinke at the warninge of the thunderes voice.
The virtuous, like the tender MYRTLE, bende
Beneathe the blaste—no enemye to them.

FOOLE.—The Foole I see thenne hath a knavish coveringe. [*It thundereth againe.*] There againe Madame. I had rathere he mye Ladye o'the broache, and runne by the fireside of a Courte kitchen, than contende with this strange fire that roastes a manne alive.

QUEENE

QUEENE.—Go thenne, poor KNAVE, consult thye bodies comforte.

Gette thee to Courte againe, feede and be merye.
Thy Mistresse, Boy, canne wander forthe alone;
Alle daye can journeye onne the flintye roade,
And, whenne the nighte comes, and the sleepless windes
Doe walke on their greate errandes, lay mee downe
On some wilde bedde, composed of withered leaves,
Thenne praise our Goddes, and feare no fairye tempter.

F I N I S.

SHAKSPEARE'S MANUSCRIPTS,

IN THE POSSESSION

OF

Mr. IRELAND,

EXAMINED,

RESPECTING

THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVIDENCES

OF

THEIR AUTHENTICITY.

By PHILALETHES.

Ac fine dubio in omni re, vincit imitationem VERITAS.

CICERO.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

1796.

[Price One Shilling.]

PREFACE.

THE Author of theſe pages chuſes not to prefix his name to them, for the following reaſons:

Firſt. He is not, in the leaſt, ambitious of literary fame; and writes only in ſupport of what he apprehends to be Truth.

Secondly. He is deſirous that the proofs and arguments ſhould ſtand on their own ground, independent of all other conſiderations; and to have a fair chance, by being left wholly to themſelves; neither recommended by the authority, or depreciated by the name of any perſon and character whatever.

If, in the courſe of public inquiry, it ſhould appear either neceſſary or expedient, he will very willingly come forward with as much openneſs and candour, as he at preſent conceals himſelf with prudence and reſerve.

SHAKSPEARE's

MANUSCRIPTS, &c.

SHAKSPEARE has for theſe laſt forty years been ſo much the object of attention in the literary world, that his works have not only employed various commentators, but every thing relating to him has been ſought after with peculiar avidity and ſedulous curioſity, by the unwearied expoſitor, the inquiſitive antiquary, and the enthuſiaſtic poet.

Later inquiries have not been able to add much information reſpecting this great, and juſtly admired poet, to that which the editors of his works have given in their reſpective publications.

Theſe reſearches proving unſucceſsful, it was concluded, that all the knowledge reſpecting

Shakſpeare, that could be procured, had been obtained. As the relics ſought for could not be found, it was conceived, that what at firſt was concealed by chance, or deſign, had afterwards been deſtroyed by accident, or ignorance; and that, after ſuch indefatigable inquiries, the things ſought, not being found, did not exiſt.

Repeated reſearches being ſo often diſappointed, were at length abandoned: and we ſat contentedly down with the diſcoveries already made; ſatisfying ourſelves with the thought, that, though much might have been loſt, yet much ſtill remained; and that the treaſure in our hands was almoſt a compenſation for the want of that which we never poſſeſſed. In ſuch a ſtate of compoſed acquieſcence, and with no hopes of farther diſcoveries, it muſt be acknowledged, that, on the firſt report of papers, and other things, being brought to light, which were not only aſſerted to belong unto, but to be actually written by Shakſpeare; unuſual curioſity, as well as ſome doubts concerning their authenticity, would be excited; and that, in proportion to the importance of the things diſcovered, and

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the pains before taken to procure even fragments of this illuſtrious poet, and the diſappointment that had hitherto attended the inquiry.

But when we were informed, that not only plays, written with Shakſpeare's own hand, together with original letters to and from the bard; with other curious papers, teſtamentary, and many legal inſtruments; and a number or printed books, in the margins of which he had written notes and obſervations, appeared; when all this rich and multiform treaſure burſt forth at once from obſcurity, and a mine was ſuddenly and unexpectedly diſcovered, containing theſe precious ſtores; it was reaſonable, after the firſt emotions of ſurpriſe had ſubſided, to inquire, not only into the circumſtances that led to, and attended the diſcovery; but alſo into the evidence, and proofs on which their high pretenſions to authenticity were founded. The things diſcovered were of ſuch a nature, and in themſelves ſo curious, various, and important, as to put us upon our guard at the commencement of the inquiry; and to warn us to proceed with the moſt cautious deliberation, to peruſe theſe records with the cloſeſt attention, and moſt

accurate inveſtigation, and to decide alone on the moſt convincing and inconteſtable proofs of their authenticity. And, as the matter was circumſtanced, it was contended, and admitted, that ſuch proofs ſhould be ſo clear, and ſo compulſive, as to ſatisfy the mind, and procure the belief of the moſt ſcrupulous inquirer; and ſilence, though it might not ſatisfy, even ſcepticiſm itſelf.

Under the full impreſſion of theſe ſentiments, I enter upon an inquiry into the papers, and other inſtruments, in the poſſeſſion of Mr. Ireland; moſt of which I have ſeen, and attentively inſpected and peruſed. Before I proceed, I muſt ſolemnly declare, that I am intereſted in this matter no further than I am intereſted for TRUTH. I never had any connexion of any ſort with MR. IRELAND, or even a knowledge of his perſon, before I was introduced to him, by a gentleman of the firſt character and reputation, to inſpect the manuſcripts. Since, indeed, I have viſited him often: and it is but doing him that juſtice to which he is entitled, when I declare, that, from all I have been able to diſcover, and I watched him from the firſt with a curious and ſuſpicious eye,

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no man in his ſituation, could have behaved in a more open, fair, candid, and liberal manner.

In order to form our judgment on this matter, it is evidently neceſſary, that we firſt briefly recite the various particulars of which this vaſt maſs of evidence is compoſed; and then, conſider the *external and internal evidences*, by which their authenticity is ſuppoſed to be incontrovertibly proved.

Many of theſe original papers are now publiſhed by Mr. Ireland: they are as follows:

Fac-ſimiles of Shakſpeare's Autograph.

Do. of Queen Elizabeth's Letter to him.

Do. of Four Miſcellaneous Papers.

Do. of a Letter to Anna Hathereway (whom Shakſpeare afterwards married), incloſing a lock of his hair.

Do. of a Copy of Verſes to the ſame.

Do. of a Copy of Shakſpeare's Letter to the Earl of Southampton.

Do. of the Earl's Anſwer to the ſame.

Do. of Shakſpeare's Profeſſion of his Faith.

Do. of a Letter to Richard Cowley.

Fac-

Fac-ſimile of a Pen Drawing, or Sketch of Shakſpeare, by himſelf, with his Arms and Creſt, with two ſignatures of his name.

Do. of the Reverſe, with his Initials, &c. &c.

A Deed of Gift to William Henry Ireland, with fac-ſimiles of his ſignature and ſeal, regularly atteſted. In which he gives to the ſaid Ireland, ſeveral plays, and ten pounds for a ring, in teſtimony of gratitude towards him, for having, at the riſque of his own life, ſaved that of Shakſpeare, when drowning in the river Thames.

Fac-ſimile of tributary Lines to the ſaid Ireland, with the Arms of Ireland, and thoſe of Shakſpeare, linked together by a chain, rudely ſketched by himſelf.

Do. a Pen Sketch of Ireland's houſe in Black-Friars.

Do. another Pen Sketch of the Arms of Shakſpeare and Ireland, and two ſignatures of Shakſpeare.

Do. as it is imagined of Shakſpeare himſelf, in the Character of Baſſanio, a whole length tinted Drawing; on which are his arms, and

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on each ſide, the names of ſeveral of his plays, and the initials of his name.

Fac-ſimile on the reverſe of the above, a Drawing, in the ſame manner as above, of Shylock.

An Agreement with John Lowine, with a fac-ſimile of Shakſpeare's and Lowine's names and ſeals, duly atteſted.

Another Agreement with Henry Condell, with fac-ſimiles and atteſtations as the above.

A Leaſe from Shakſpeare to Michael Fraſer, and Elizabeth his wife, with fac-ſimiles, &c. as above.

A Deed of Truſt from Shakſpeare to John Hemynge, an eminent player at that time, and afterwards the Manager at the Theatre, and who, with Condell, publiſhed Shakſpeare's Works in the year 1623; with fac-ſimiles of his ſignature and ſeal, atteſted by three witneſſes.

The Tragedy of King Lear, with fac-ſimiles of the title, and of the firſt and laſt pages of the play.

Fac-ſimile of the firſt page of a fragment of the Tragedy of Hamlet.

Mr. Ireland acquaints the Public, that, among other many curious papers of Shakſpeare, another and more intereſting hiſtorical play than Vortigern, which will ſoon be exhibited, has been diſcovered in the hand-writing of Shakſpeare; which play, Mr. Ireland promiſes in due time to lay before the Public. He alſo informs us, that he is in poſſeſſion of a great number of books, ſuppoſed, by the autograph, notes, and marginal obſervations, to have formerly belonged to Shakſpeare.

Theſe books made a part of Shakſpeare's library; which, according to a catalogue, evidently written by the ſame hand as wrote the other papers, conſiſted of above eleven hundred volumes.

Now, as upon the face of all theſe various particulars, there appears a manifeſt unity, conformity, and congruity, both from the autograph, and ſimilarity of the writing; we muſt pronounce, *that they are, every, and all of them, ſpurious, and forged; or authentic, and what they are aſſerted to be.*

As to the external evidences of the documents, it is ſaid by many gentlemen, who have attentively

tively inſpected them, and who, from their profeſſions, ſituations, and abilities, muſt be admitted to be competent judges; that the paper on which they are written, both as to its various water-marks, manufacture, and other characteriſtics, bears evident proofs of antiquity.

The legal inſtruments are of ſuch a nature, and their marks ſo authentic; that, in the judgment of ſeveral learned gentlemen of the firſt legal reputation, they would be admitted as evidence in any court of judicature. And when theſe are conſidered in connexion with other papers, referring to circumſtances which are the groundwork of the legal inſtruments themſelves, they reciprocally illuſtrate and confirm each other. This is remarkably the caſe reſpecting the Deed of Gift to IRELAND, on the extraordinary circumſtance of his having ſaved Shakſpeare's life when nearly drowned in the river Thames; and alſo in that very important Deed of Truſt to John Hemynge.

Now, as we have juſt obſerved, theſe papers and legal inſtruments muſt have been forged, or they are authentic. If forged, the forgery muſt have been executed at, or near the time in which

Shakſpeare lived. And it will be difficult to aſſign a reaſon of any ſort for a forgery ſo circumſtanced, and ſo timed. And we muſt obſerve, that it is very extraordinary that forgeries of ſuch magnitude, ſhould never have been applied to any uſe. That they were not, evidently appears from their having lain in obſcurity till their late diſcovery: for, if uſe had been made of them, they would have been diſperſed, and could never have remained entire and in an unbroken maſs. Before the charge of forgery can be ſuppoſed to attach on the other papers, we are to account for, or get rid of theſe legal inſtruments; at leaſt ſo far as theſe inſtruments relate to theſe papers. Indeed, taking them in the whole, they are ſo numerous, and yet conſiſtent; ſo various, and yet ſo minute and particular, and relate to ſo many circumſtances, as to carry on the face of them very ſtrong preſumptions of authenticity. At the ſame time we muſt obſerve, that, ſeparately conſidered, they are in their nature ſo unconnected as to time, circumſtances, and events, as to warrant us in ſaying, that it is by no means probable, if poſſible, for impoſture to have deemed them neceſſary; or if it had, to have accompliſh-

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ed the taſk of ſuch forgery. And legal inſtruments, from their very nature, and the difficulty attending their fabrication, would have been the laſt things that impoſture would have attempted. For though it muſt be readily allowed, that impoſture is very apt to attempt to prove too much, and over-do its part; yet it ſeldom travels far out of its road, having only one point, or object in view. Indeed it is by this limited and confined view, and by attempting to do too much, and produce too many proofs of *one* thing, that impoſture often detects, and defeats itſelf.

CICERO, in his oration for Cluentius, very properly remarks, on the effects of a combination of improbabilities; *hoc uno modo ſæpe multorum improbitate depreſſa veritas emergit.* By parity of reaſon, we may ſay, that by the attempt of bringing too many things together, which on the face of them may bear the appearance of veriſimilitude, error is diſcovered, or impoſture detected. Whereas, in the courſe of truth, where things really exiſt, however diſſonant, unconnected, nay, even oppoſite, and contradictory they may at firſt appear; yet when they are brought into view, and their circumſtances duly weighed, and attentively con-

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ſidered, their remote connexions become evident, their relations are diſcovered, their ſeeming inconſiſtencies vaniſh: they unite, coaleſce, and mutually ſupport and illuſtrate each other.

With reſpect to myſelf, I am not only free to confeſs, but bold to aſſert, that, after frequent inſpection, and careful peruſal of theſe papers, and duly weighing their claims to my belief, founded on their own evidence, I am not only fully ſatisfied of their authenticity: but alſo, that I am as fully ſatisfied and believe, that no human wiſdom, cunning, art, or deceit, if they could be united, are equal to the taſk of ſuch an impoſture. On the other ſide, I am forced to yield my aſſent, becauſe not only ſuch evidences of authenticity, as might have been expected, really appear; but a variety of others, equally ſtrong and influential, that could not have been reaſonably expected.

The identity of Shakſpeare's autograph, in the numberleſs ſignatures of his name on theſe papers, as well as in the papers themſelves, manifeſtly appears. There are no more variations than might have been ſuppoſed to take place from their being written on different papers,

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in different ink, at different times, in various humours, and diſpoſitions of mind, and on various occaſions. The errors and omiſſions that appear, are ſuch as might have been expected from a man of a warm temper, impetuous and prompt genius; which would naturally prevent his compoſing with minute attention; and reviewing, and correcting what was thus rapidly produced with labour and accuracy: but they are ſuch as impoſture would have ſcarcely deemed neceſſary; nay, rather ſuch as it would moſt probably have carefully avoided. Therefore it is not ſtraining the argument to ſay, that theſe very errors and omiſſions (the identity of the other characteriſtics maintained) are no inconſiderable proofs of authenticity. Theſe, with other minutiæ, both of ſubjects and circumſtances, deſerve attention; for, in point of evidence, they are great and important, inverſely as they are (in themſelves ſimply conſidered) little and inſignificant. Theſe, weak as they in themſelves appear,

"*Tho' trifles light as air, are confirmations ſtrong.*"

What man, or ſet of men, who had ſat down with an intention to deceive the world, by palming upon

upon it forgeries of plays in the name of Shakſpeare, could poſſibly have deemed it neceſſary to the ſupport of ſuch a deſign, to have fabricated ſuch writings, and forged ſuch legal inſtruments, as thoſe which now exiſt, and now appear?

Who would have deemed it neceſſary in this caſe, to have forged letters* in the name of Queen Elizabeth? whoſe characteriſtic writing, and autograph, are ſo well known: or if ſuch had been deemed neceſſary, and preſumption had ventured at ſo bold a flight, would the ſame impoſture have deemed it equally ſerviceable to its plan to have fallen from the Queen of England to Ann Hatherway? Or if it had thought to have ſecured itſelf between the two extremes, would it not probably have contented itſelf with leſs minute and circumſtantial evidence, than that of a lock of the Poet's own hair, platted too with the hand of the bard in braid of love, and preſented to the obſcure damſel with a letter and copy of verſes, ſuch as a ſimple ſwain, as he

* To and from the Earl of Southampton, and others, in the name of Queen Elizabeth.

then was, would have tranſmitted to his fair? O! no.—Nature, and Nature alone, produces documents like theſe. They are marked with the authentic ſeal of her artleſs ſimplicity. Theſe are fine touches, which impoſture can never imitate. It knows full well it is not equal to the taſk; and therefore never attempts it. Nor is it to be conceived, that it ever could have deemed it neceſſary to fortify itſelf with the trivial aid of unimportant receipts, and notes of hand. Much leſs is it to be imagined, that, in order to gain credit for the works of the Poet, it ſhould have been thought neceſſary to make him a ſaint. *Shakſpeare's Profeſſion of Faith,* is a curious relic, conſidered as to its nature and compoſition: and is what ſuch a man may be ſuppoſed to pen, but the laſt that impoſture would venture to forge.

And what ſhall we ſay when we turn from this grave document of ſerious piety, to his Letter to his friend Cowley, in which was incloſed a portrait of himſelf, ſketched by his own hand, in playful humour of trifling wit? Of the ſame ſort is the ſketch of his friend Ireland's houſe; with the minute reſpecting the circumſtance that gave riſe to the attempt: and alſo the tributary

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lines to Ireland, dictated by a grateful heart, for no leſs an obligation than that of being ſaved from drowning in the Thames. Can it be ſuppoſed that any man, in the courſe of impoſition, would ever have riſqued iſſuing ſuch coinage as this, and ventured at fabricating ſuch a ſtory, of which there never had been the ſlighteſt report? Impoſture, in general, keeps within bounds of probability.

But were not all theſe forgeries of ſuch various ſort, and of ſuch widely different natures and characters, ſufficient? Was it thought neceſſary ſtill, the more effectually to delude, and more ſucceſsfully to carry on the impoſition, to produce two curiouſly tinted drawings of players, in the characters and ſtage dreſſes of BASSANIO and SHYLOCK? I leave it to candour and common ſenſe to anſwer theſe queſtions.

But further: It ſeems that all this was not enough. It was not deemed ſufficient, in order to obtain the deſired credit, to produce writings ſo various as to form, matter, and circumſtances; but recourſe muſt be had to the formal proofs of legal inſtruments: and thus the agreements with LOWINE and CONDELLE, and the leaſe to Fraſer

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and his wife, are preſſed into the ſervice, and compelled to lend their ſolemn ſupport to the impoſture.

But what are we to think, and what are we to ſay, of the very extraordinary and important DEED OF TRUST to JOHN HEMYNGE?—Was this addition neceſſary to thoſe already recited? Would impoſture have ventured at ſuch a ſpecific diſtribution of SHAKSPEARE's fortune and effects? Or, if it had, would it have ventured to have laid the ſame pious man, who penned ſo excellent a PROFESSION OF FAITH, under the imputation of incontinence, and nuptial infidelity? cruelly ſubſtantiating ſuch moral dilinquency, by legal proof, which SHAKSPEARE himſelf is made to confirm and authenticate with his own hand and ſeal? There would have been at leaſt an inconſiſtency in thus degrading the ſaint to the ſinner. And to do juſtice even to impoſture itſelf, I do not think it could have had recourſe to ſuch unjuſtifiable means, even in ſupport of its own nefarious deſign. It is but fair, then, to conclude, it never did.

I leave the play of Lear, printed in all reſpects, as to diviſion, length of lines, and orthography,

like the original in the hands of MR. IRELAND, by its own internal evidence to ſpeak for itſelf.

We now ſhall attend to proofs of a different nature. Here are a number of printed books produced; and of ſuch a *ſort*, as might reaſonably be ſuppoſed to belong to our bard. They have almoſt all his ſignature on them: and their margins are filled with ſuch notes and obſervations, as no man could have made but upon an attentive peruſal of them. Now is it reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that, in the courſe of impoſture, the laborious taſk of peruſing theſe volumes, and filling their margins with notes, would have been deemed neceſſary? But ſuppoſe it had. I then will venture to aſſert, that when all the other vaſt maſs of fabrifications are brought into the account, it would have been impoſſible for one man to have executed the buſineſs. But identity of writing, and unity of character, appear throughout the whole. Theſe various writings could only have been produced as the orderly and progreſſive events aroſe which gave them birth: and the ſame progreſſive ſucceſſion, in point of time, is neceſſary to account for theſe being the productions of one and the ſame man.

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The moſt conſummate wiſdom, the moſt perſpicacious ingenuity, united with the moſt artful cunning, and moſt indefatigable labour, could not have anticipated events, and forged ſuch a ſeries, or executed ſuch a work.

But though the life and ingenuity of another were not equal to the taſk, in point of impoſition; that of Shakſpeare's was equal thereto, in the ordinary courſe of human affairs. To believe theſe things therefore to be ſpurious inventions of others, involves us in unſurmountable and unaccountable difficulties. To admit them as legitimate productions of Shakſpeare, involves us in no difficulty whatever.

Perhaps, upon due reflection, the particular evidences ariſing from the books thus circumſtanced, are of more weight than at firſt might be imagined. There can be no doubt that Shakſpeare read much; and ſuch authors to which his peculiar genius would particulaly direct him. Conſidering the veneration in which his memory was held by thoſe who had been happy in his acquaintance when alive, as well as the enthuſiaſm with which every relic has been ſought from his time down to the preſent; is it not ex-

traordinary that few, if any books, or papers, authenticated by his own ſignature, or by the tradition of others, have ever come into the poſſeſſion of the learned? It could not be ſuppoſed theſe books were annihilated by accident, or deſign: the moſt probable circumſtance was, that they were by chance concealed. Their late diſcovery proves this: and thus far agrees with the ordinary courſe of things. In point of evidence this is ſtrong: here is a fact naturally accounted for, that otherwiſe would have been very extraordinary; and their having lain dormant ſo long, and being now found, with the peculiarities of the ſtate in which they appear, are as ſtrong proofs of their authenticity, as far as ſuch proofs go, as can poſſibly be conceived. Here are the books, with ſuch peculiar marks, attributes, notes, and characters, as to aſcertain beyond all doubt to whom they originally belonged. Shakſpeare, by the ſignature of his name, by his curious, ſpecific, and characteriſtic notes, has preſſed this great phalanx of other printed authors into his own ſervice. He is thus ſurrounded with a hoſt of witneſſes: for not only every book, but almoſt every page of

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ſome of them, declare to whom they belonged. I therefore think I ſee this immortal poet riſe again to life, holding theſe ſacred relics in one hand, and hear him ſay, *Theſe were mine*: at the ſame time pointing with the other to theſe important volumes, once his own, informing us, that theſe were his delightful companions in his leiſure hours of retirement, and ſtudy: by converſing with whom he derived pleaſure, profit, and delight: who letting fall their ſparks upon his enkindling mind, lighted up that *muſe of fire*, by which inſpired,

" This Poet's eye in a fine phrenzy rolling,
" Did glance from heav'n to earth, from earth to heav'n."

Now as it appears from what has been ſaid, that it was impoſſible for impoſture ever to have attempted, and if it had attempted, ever to have executed, what is here produced; and that from the very nature, variety, and extraordinary characteriſtics of the things themſelves; yet various, extraordinary, and great as they are; none are found inconſiſtent, none contradictory, none incredible. SHAKSPEARE's genius, character, life, and ſituation, connect them all. Multitudinous

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and diverſified as they are; however remote, and apparently divided from, and unconnected with each other; yet, trace them all back to their origin, and you will find them radii of the ſame great circle, all directly tending to, and uniting in one common centre:—that centre is SHAKSPEARE. Let not then any unbeliever, if ſuch there be, after the peruſal of a maſs of ſuch evidence as hath been produced, object credulity to thoſe who have admitted their credibility and given their aſſent. For as in ſome other caſes of infidelity, ſo it is peculiarly in that now before us; thoſe who reject what is propoſed to their belief on the rational evidences adduced in its ſupport, will find themſelves involved in more difficulties, and have more to account for, and more to reconcile, nay more to *believe*, than thoſe, who, on the nature, and ſtability of the evidence, reſt their rational faith. Indeed the evidences of the things in queſtion, are as various and multiform, as the things themſelves; and though they may at firſt view appear diſjointed, and detached from each other; to have no common bond of union to give them ſupport; yet their variety does not ſurpriſe, their minute-

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neſs does not diſtract, their ſeparation does not confound us. They are all brought into unity by the exalted genius and boundleſs imagination of him to whom they relate. They grow out of, belong to, are his appropriates: he gathers all to himſelf. They are ſacred FASCES bound together in indiſſoluble union by the authoritative hand of Shakſpeare himſelf; to which we muſt all, ſooner or later, yield ready aſſent, or reluctant obedience.

I do not believe that a caſe ever exiſted, in which that particular ſort of internal evidence reſulting from *character*, was ſo ſtrong, and ſo convincing, as in the preſent.

In ſome caſes, it is true, an author, as well as other men, might be imitated, both in his manner and ſtyle, as well as in the ſignature of his name. But that is not the caſe in the preſent inſtance. All great and eminent geniuſes have their characteriſtic peculiarities, which not only *diſtinguiſh them* from all *others*, but *make them what they are*. Theſe none can rival, none ſucceſsfully imitate. Of all men and poets, Shakſpeare had the moſt of theſe. He was a particular being, he ſtood alone. To imitate him, ſo as to paſs the deceit

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on the world, appears to me next to an impoſſibility. Who could ſoar with his ſublime genius? Who rove with his boundleſs imagination? Who could rival his pregnant wit? Who with intuitive inſpection diſcover the workings of the human mind, and by the natural evolutions of the paſſions intereſt us ſo deeply as this matchleſs poet? Now theſe papers in queſtion bear on them the ſame ſtrong marks of his original genius, as thoſe with which his acknowledged writings are deeply impreſſed. Is it then an unfair inquiry to aſk, if theſe are not Shakſpeare's, to whom do they belong? To whom elſe are they to be aſcribed? Was ever another caſt in his mould? Or can any other be paralleled with him?

This appears to me a proof of ſuch a nature, and ſo peculiarly applicable to the caſe before us, that I hope I ſhall be pardoned for dwelling thereon. For my own part, I muſt confeſs, that, if ſuch evidences of character had appeared unſupported by any other, I ſhould have pronounced upon them at once; and have ſaid, that as there never was but *one* man who could have produced ſuch works, that he, and *he only*, has produced them. The peculiarity, nature, and force of this proof,

proof, and its fair application to the caſe in queſtion, is of ſuch weight with me, that I am free to declare, that had not Shakſpeare's name appeared upon theſe papers, I ſhould not have heſitated to have aſcribed them to him.

But theſe papers bear not only the ſignature of his hand, but alſo the ſtamp of his ſoul, and the traits of his genius. His *mind* is as manifeſt as his *hand*. The touches of the ſame great maſter every-where appear, and appear to advantage, as they have not been corrected, or chaſtiſed by a bold, or unſkilful hand. Here they are with all their excellencies, and all their imperfections on their head: and by, as well as with theſe, they are to be judged.

Perhaps it may be expected that ſome notice ſhould be taken of the want of fuller information, *from whom, and from whence*, theſe ſacred relics are derived. I ſhould think that what Mr. Ireland has ſo fairly, and liberally, ſaid in his preface reſpecting this matter, ought, at leaſt for the preſent, to ſatisfy the candid Public: more eſpecially when we conſider, that he was laid under thoſe reſtrictions which he there mentions, by the expreſs injunction of the gentleman to whoſe gratuitous bounty he is indebted for theſe precious remains.

But let us argue this matter entirely independent of theſe conſiderations. Certain it is, that if Mr. Ireland, or any other perſon, could have traced, by an unbroken chain of evidence, theſe papers, books, and legal inſtruments, up to the time of Shakſpeare; and ſhown that they did originally belong to him; that, ſo far as the queſtion depended upon this ſort of evidence, it would be immediately decided.

Suppoſe this to have been the caſe, and that ſuch proofs could be adduced? may I be permitted to aſk, if theſe might not have been called in queſtion, if, upon the face of the inſtruments themſelves, and the inſpection and peruſal of their contents, thoſe external and internal marks, characters, and evidences, ſhould have been found wanting, as might naturally have been expected; and which, it is now contended, do really appear? If ſo, and ſurely it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe that ſo it would have been; then, after all, we ſhould (as in all ſuch matters muſt be the caſe) be thrown back again upon the external and internal evidences of the documents themſelves; and then, what becomes of the comparatively ſmall, and uninfluential evidence, ariſing from the ſuppoſed ability of tracing theſe reſpective writings up to

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the time of Shakſpeare? I confeſs I do not myſelf ſee that this ſort of proof, ſimply conſidered in itſelf, could have been ſo ſatisfactory, and ſo compellent, as to have gained, or forced belief; if, with any plauſible reaſon, the defect of external and internal evidence in the writings themſelves, could have been urged in oppoſition thereto. But at the ſame time it is neceſſary to obſerve, that the like argument will by no means apply to the oppoſite caſe. I mean, that the want of expreſs teſtimony and direct proof of their being traced up to Shakſpeare, does not impair the ſtrength of the external and internal evidences of the authenticity of theſe writings, in the ſame proportion, as the want of this latter evidence would affect that of the former. Which brings us round to the ſame ſtate of the queſtion again; that, after all that can be ſaid, and after all that can be adduced, *it is on the external and internal evidences of the things themſelves we are to form our judgment, and ultimately decide.* This ſeems fully to anſwer, or rather to obviate the queſtion: and conſequently the neceſſity of an anſwer), *From whence and from whom theſe papers are derived?* If it be true what is ſtated above, then, from whenceſoever they come, by whomſoever they

are found, let them be attended with whatever other circumſtances can poſſibly be ſuppoſed; *by their own evidence, external and internal, and by theſe* ALONE, *they are to be judged, and their authenticity determined.* It matters not, in this point of view, whether they have lain for ages concealed in a cabinet, or yeſterday dropt from the clouds. Here they are, the ſame as they would have been in themſelves, though they had been known to have been in exiſtence from the time in which Shakſpeare lived. The circumſtance attending their undiſcovered ſtate has nothing to do with the queſtion. It is on their diſcovery, and their inſpection, we are to judge. The ſimple circumſtance of their having lain dormant ſo long, is not of that nature to affect, much leſs to invalidate, their authenticity when diſcovered. The ſame chance (as it is called) which unfortunately concealed them from paſt generations, hath moſt fortunately revealed them to us. Their having remained ſo long undiſcovered, is a circumſtance, which, in the courſe of human affairs, has happened to the moſt eſtimable remains of ancient learning, and the moſt curious works of art. Let not then a thing, the reſult of uncertainty, mutability, and that chance to which all human affairs

affairs as well as human works are ſubject, be brought in this particular inſtance as an exceptive objection. Indeed there was no great neceſſity of thus enlarging upon this point; becauſe, when the argument of objection is compreſſed into its own narrow dimenſions, the bare ſtatement of it will be ſufficient to ſhow its futility. And it is this: *Theſe things not being found before, is an argument againſt their authenticity now they are diſcovered.* But their authenticity is, *toto cælo*, diſtinct from their diſcovery, and the times, and circumſtances in which they were found. Their authenticity, as before obſerved, is to be judged of, and determined by the external and internal evidences of the things themſelves, whenever they appear; And behold! *here they are.*

But to give the argument full play: let us ſuppoſe all that can be urged; and, for a moment, admit, that, being able to trace up the ſeveral writings in queſtion, to the time of Shakſpeare himſelf, would have been a conſiderable argument in their favour; and a collateral ſupport of the external and internal evidences. May we not ſay, that if, upon an impartial inquiry, theſe evidences are ſuch, as fully to ſatisfy the mind, and gain its aſſent, that then ſuch evi-

dences

dences muſt, by the ſtate of the argument, be allowed to have great and important weight; ſeeing they can ſupport the cauſe unſupported themſelves. If this be the caſe, then it will follow, that they need not the collateral aſſiſtance of any other proofs. In the preſent inſtance, when this particular proof demanded by the queſtion, *From whence did they come, and from whom are they derived?* is wanting; and that want not only ſo candidly acknowledged, but rationally accounted for, by the very circumſtances themſelves by which they came into the hands of the preſent poſſeſſor; can the urgent and continued demand for ſuch proof, be aſcribed to aught elſe, but unreaſonable expectation, unjuſtifiable caprice, or boundleſs curioſity?

If then, as muſt evidently be the caſe from the nature of the writings in queſtion, we can only form a proper judgment, and decide upon their authenticity, from their external and internal evidence; and ſuch evidence can alone be obtained by a nice and narrow inſpection, and a careful and accurate peruſal of theſe papers; how unfair and unjuſt, how unreaſonable, nay preſumptuous, would it be for any man, though gifted with conſummate wiſdom, though poſ-

ſeſſed

ſeſſed of the moſt exalted underſtanding, cleareſt intellect, and moſt penetrating ſagacity, to paſs a deciſive ſentence upon ſuch writings; and that too *againſt* their AUTHENTICITY, *having never inſpected, having never examined them?*

I doubt not, but if this, which I have put in the form of a queſtion, had appeared in the form of an aſſertion, it would have ſtartled the mind, and wounded the feelings of every unprejudiced reader: ſince I do not believe a man is to be found of the moſt ordinary underſtanding, who has the uſe of his moral powers, and can diſtinguiſh right from wrong, who would heſitate one moment in deciding the queſtion. Sorry am I to be under the neceſſity of ſtating this matter even in a queſtionable form. And were it not from fear of leaving unfavourable impreſſions on the minds of my readers, and fixing a ſtigma of reproach (which I would by all means, if poſſible, ever avoid) upon the refinement, candour, and liberality of the preſent age; I would (compelled thereto by what I *know*) have ſtated it in the downright way of *unqualified aſſertion*. I know what I hazard by the declaration; but juſtice forces me, however reluctant, to make it: and I moſt ſincerely lament the neceſſity. But I turn

bluſhing from the thought; and ſhall only ſay, that, next to the unmanly, unjuſt, and nefarious attempt of palming forgeries, of any ſort, upon the world; is that of imputing to others the ſame bold, audacious, and wicked deſign.

I have only to add, that theſe papers, books, and inſtruments, in the poſſeſſion of Mr. Ireland, are open to the inſpection and peruſal of every candid, fair, and impartial inquirer. The learned are earneſtly ſolicited, and not only invited, but urged, to the inquiry into their authenticity. It is no leſs Mr. Ireland's wiſh, than his intereſt in every reſpect, that this ſhould be done. Being fully perſuaded himſelf, and ſupported in this perſuaſion by the joint teſtimony of a number of learned and inquiſitive men, of the firſt abilities in their reſpective profeſſions, of the undoubted authenticity of theſe writings; he took the moſt effectual means, as he thought, to make it generally known, that he had ſuch treaſures in his hands, before he ventured to publiſh them. And it was not before he had conſulted ſome of the moſt eminent in their different profeſſions, and men of diſtinguiſhed characters and abilities; and having received not only unqualified declarations of their full conviction, but alſo the moſt

liberal

liberal promiſes of ſupport; that he ventured to announce to the world that he was in poſſeſſion of theſe precious remains. As to the full conviction of ſome of theſe, ſeveral gentlemen, who in their profeſſion, character, and ability, rank high in the literary world, I can ſpeak of my own certain knowledge. And I beg leave to mention one particular inſtance, among many others, of a learned dignified Divine, whom, with two others, I introduced myſelf to peruſe theſe papers; who ſignified his approbation and conviction in the following ſtrong expreſſion: "Dr. "Farmer has proved, as nearly to mathematical "demonſtration as the nature of the thing will "allow, that Shakſpeare was not poſſeſſed of claſ-"ſical learning. The papers we have inſpected "this day come as near to the ſame ſort of proof, "reſpecting their authenticity, as the nature of "ſuch evidence can admit." In which declaration he was ſupported by the ready aſſent of two other reverend and learned gentlemen, by whom we were accompanied.

I have thus freely, and without reſerve, offered theſe obſervations to the candid conſideration of the Public, with all imaginable deference and reſpect; not over-ſolicitous what reception they

may meet with, or over-anxious with what conviction they may immediately be attended. I wiſh not, by overſtraining my argument, to put a wrong bias on any one's mind; or intereſt them any further than I wiſh them to be influenced by TRUTH. And above all, I moſt ardently wiſh, that what I have ſuggeſted, may be the means of exciting a deſire of inſpecting the papers themſelves; being fully perſuaded, that this will prove not only the beſt means of judging on their authenticity, but alſo of eſtabliſhing their claims to credibility.

I think theſe papers ſtand on a firm foundation; and that, ſtanding on them, the weakeſt defender is ſtrong. It is this ſtation, fortified by truth, that gives me boldneſs. And as I think it tenable againſt a hoſt of oppoſing aſſailants, however numerous, however commiſſioned, becauſe it is too ſtrong to be ſapped, and too elevated to be taken by ſtorm, I reſt in perfect ſecurity, humbly offering this piece of advice to any who may have the hardihood to make an attack—to beware, leſt their own weapons recoil, and wound themſelves.

FINIS.

VORTIGERN

UNDER CONSIDERATION;

WITH

GENERAL REMARKS

ON

MR. JAMES BOADEN's LETTER TO

GEORGE STEEVENS, Esq.

RELATIVE TO THE

MANUSCRIPTS, DRAWINGS, SEALS, &c.

ASCRIBED TO

SHAKESPEARE,

AND IN THE POSSESSION OF

SAMUEL IRELAND, Esq.

LONDON:

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1796.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Author of the following Pages having conſidered the MSS. FAC SIMILIA, &c. aſcribed to Shakeſpeare, and publiſhed by Mr. Ireland, ſubmits to the public his arguments to ſpeak for themſelves, declining all *pompous diſplay of name*, as he has no FAME to add to, and aſſured that none can be founded on a mere controverſy.

Middle Temple.

VORTIGERN, &c.

UNDER CONSIDERATION.

WHEN a Play, ſaid to be written by the immortal Shakeſpeare, the *Poet of Nature*, (as ſtiled by Dr. Johnſon) is announced for a ſpeedy repreſentation, it is natural that every one's curioſity ſhould be excited, and impartial perſons muſt certainly wiſh that that curioſity may not be diſappointed. The preſent dearth of Dramatic Entertainments renders me, I own, anxious that the Piece may be *legitimate*, and for this reaſon I have been conſidering within myſelf all the *probabilities*: for though ſome have *poſitively* aſſerted, from *conjecture*, that the Play is NOT he production of the immortal Bard, yet I would not from *conjecture* inſiſt that it *was*—only that it *may*—

Firſt of all, let us conſider the character of Shakeſpeare. His Biographers agree that he was

the leaſt ambitious of all poets, and ſo very indifferent about his future fame, that he paid little or no attention to any corrections, and, derided as it may be, the performers *did* take liberties with his pieces; and where is the wonder—do they not take liberties *now?* That his MSS. were always in a ſcattered ſtate is likewiſe proved from an account that two large cheſts filled with Shakeſpeare's looſe papers, were in the hands of an ignorant baker in Warwick, who married one of our Poet's deſcendants, and which were careleſsly thrown about as garret lumber and litter, to the particular knowledge of Sir William Biſhop. This careleſſneſs in our Author renders it very *probable* that he had written many Plays which were never acted; laid aſide, perhaps, for a future opportunity and corrections. What particularly ſtrikes me that VORTIGERN may be original, is, the ſubject of the Play, and the MSS. with which it is attended. The chief reaſon which led Pope to doubt that the *Play of Edward the Third*, found by Theobald, was really written by Shakeſpeare, was its being unaccompanied with any other papers or notes, and particularly the want of his name; for it was the ancient cuſtom for authors to ſubſcribe their names, inſtead of ſaying (according to the modern faſhion) *Finis*, or *The End.* This circumſtance (though laughed at by the *ignorant)* is greatly in favour of the MSS. in the poſſeſſion of Mr. Ireland.

land. Theobald had no other probates than the *date* and *ſtile*, which were conſequently diſbelieved by Mr. Pope, the letter being alſo deemed imperfect.

There is an uniformity in the hand-writing, which I think beyond the power of the moſt ingenious *forger* to have preſerved, and the ſignature of the name appears exactly ſimilar to the *Fac Simile* of Shakeſpeare's hand-writing, given in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1789, which I had previouſly examined.

The ſubject, however, is one great point to be conſidered. Shakeſpeare, we find, was partial to the Hiſtory of England, and ſeemed inclined to dramatize every part which would admit it—true—VORTIGERN is a character very little noticed by Hiſtorians; but though our Poet's learning in Greek and Latin is diſputed, it is acknowledged that he was well verſed in the moſt ſecret parts of Hiſtory, and notwithſtanding the ſelf-ſufficiency of *ſome* modern Dramatiſts, none but a Shakeſpeare *could* produce a Play *fit for the Stage* on ſo confined a ſubject; beſides, I think it very likely that any man who attempted an impoſition, would have choſen a more extenſive field. Neither do I think it probable that any man who had ability enough to write like Shakeſpeare, would transfer the fame to

his *manes*—ſure, when *ſuch* authors are much wanting, he would tiumph—avowedly in his genius—nor run the hazard of being called *an impoſtor*, when he might attain the honourable appellation of a SECOND SHAKESPEARE. Ambition is no where more conſpicuous than among writers, who have frequently prefered fame to emolument.

But what impreſſed me moſt of all with a notion that the Play may be original, were the *pitiful* alluſions and *mean* paragraphs made uſe of to defeat its appearance: theſe lead me to imagine that *ſome* are afraid the Play of VORTIGERN, eſpecially as it is to be ſucceeded by another aſcribed to Shakeſpeare, may probably correct the preſent vitiated ſtate of the Drama, and that *their* flimſey productions will not be able to withſtand ſo formidable an oppoſition. Theſe certainly are natural concluſions to draw, when we find one already has ſtood up as an *oracle* to foretel its fate, and damn the piece *before* it is played. But ſhould not VORTIGERN be ſubmitted to the public for their opinion? why be judged by an individual? Why fall under the condemnation of a SECRET *tribunal?* and be denied what is our country's boaſt, a candid, OPEN TRIAL! Theſe ſentiments, I confeſs, ariſe from peruſing a letter from Mr. Boaden to George Steevens, Eſq. on the ſubject of theſe MSS. wherein he pretends to reſpect the name of Shakeſpeare, and yet inſults

ſults the Poet, by inſinuating that any one can imitate him—I ſay, any one, when he gives *himſelf* as one example—but of this more hereafter. Let any impartial perſon look over Mr. Boaden's pages, and he muſt certainly think him exceedingly *interested* in the buſineſs, when he cannot treat it in any degree *coolly*, and what renders his warmth more ridiculous, is, that it proceeds chiefly from *conjecture*—he *thinks*—and then INSISTS—the *few* arguments which he makes uſe of, unfortunately are grounded upon ERROR, which I ſhall, in the courſe of theſe remarks, take the liberty of pointing out, and conſequently prove that the MSS. in queſtion *may be* the productions of our immortal Bard.

In reſpect to Mr. Ireland's preface, I am ſilent; aſſured that even that gentleman muſt ſay a great deal from *conjecture*, and, I think, whatever he publiſhes *from himſelf*, ſhould by no means affect the papers in queſtion.

Mr. Boaden thinks proper to remind us of the *forgeries* of the ingenious Chatterton; I mean, (for I would by no means alter the *elegant* phraſeology of Mr. B.) the PRODIGIOUS Chatterton, but there is a great difference in the manner wherein the papers ſuppoſed to be produced by that youth and the MSS. in the poſſeſſion of Mr. Ireland were offered

to

to public view; the former were diſcovered *by degrees*, but here is a diſcovery of a number of papers *at once*—a number, which I think no impoſtor could contrive and execute during his whole life—if he could, he muſt be indeed a GIANT to the *prodigious* Chatterton.

THE ORTHOGRAPHY.

Mr. Boaden has attacked the Orthography of thoſe papers, though we are told by an ingenious writer, "that in the Engliſh, the orthography has "been more vague and unaſcertained than in any "other language. Every author, and almoſt "every printer, had his particular ſyſtem; they "not only differed from one another, but there "were ſcarce any that conſiſted with himſelf; the "ſame word frequently appeared with two or "three different faces in the ſame page, not to ſay "line." Former ages were remarkable for a paucity and multiplicity of letters; the latter prevailed in Shakeſpeare's days, as the *genuine* letters of Mary Queen of Scots, Queen Elizabeth, &c. &c. prove. The ſpecimen which Mr. Boaden gives us of Spencer's orthography, is rather curirious, as it exhibits a great deal of *modern* taſte:

" So well hee woo'd her, and ſo well he wrought her,
" With faire entreety and ſweet blandiſhment
" That at the length unto a bay he brought her,
" So as ſhee to his ſpeeches was content
" To lend an ear and ſoftly to relent."

Who would ſuppoſe from this example given without ſelection, as it occurred upon opening the volume, that Spencer was (as Mr. Boaden deſcribes him) " unuſually lax in orthography, and " that the difficulties of his ſtanza compelled him " to frequent innovations to produce, what to the " eye at leaſt, ſhould look like the termination of " rhymes." I preſume much better rhyme than the above could not be found in the *Poet Laureat's* Odes; and if that be a true example of the ancient ſpelling, there is very little difference between it and the modern. How is it poſſible to judge whether or no theſe manuſcripts were the production of Shakeſpeare by the orthography, when it is well known, that Shakeſpeare *varied* in ſpelling his *own name?*

It is the opinion of our moſt eminent Antiquarians, that the ancient orthography of *manuſcript* conſiſted in more letters than that of the *printed* books of the ſame time, and the reaſon given for this opinion is very natural; in *writing* they made uſe of a ſuperfluous number of letters from *habit*; nay, ſome go ſo far as to think, from a deſire of being very *plain*, and to *prevent miſtakes*; though among

among us, unaccuſtomed to thoſe ſeeming long words, it would no doubt cauſe much miſunderſtanding and confuſion; but in *printing* this was *inconvenient*; they were obliged to abridge the letters, and by gradually diminiſhing them, orthography was reduced to the preſent ſtate. Theſe arguments are founded by comparing genuine MSS. of old times with print of the ſame date, whereby that difference now pointed out by Mr. Boaden was ſeen *before*—this therefore is no *new* diſcovery, and the cavillers, (for I preſume there are more than one, as more than one muſt ſuffer conſiderably from the reſtoration of *ſenſe* to the Drama) muſt compare theſe manuſcripts with others known to be genuine, before they condemn the orthography. Had the ſpelling been ſimilar to the firſt printed edition of Shakeſpeare, there had been greater cauſe for ſuſpicion.

AUTOGRAPH, PAPER, &c.

It is acknowledged that the Autograph and Paper belonging to theſe MSS. have all the appearance of originality—they have been examined by the firſt artiſts, who coincide in this opinion. To obviate this, Mr. B. inſinuates, how eaſy it is to procure paper of this age, and imitate ſeals and autographs; but I think this cannot be done with

with all the facility which he imagines—there muſt be a COMBINATION to effect ſo much and and greater genius's than I think the preſent age can produce, to ſuggeſt all thoſe little domeſtic occurrences, which though trifling in themſelves, are great confirmations of the originality of thoſe papers. Where is that ſociety of men, with all their boaſted abilities and profeſſed powers of imitation, that could undertake the taſk; and if it was poſſible to execute ſo great an impoſture, where is the reward for ſo much pains and trouble? Men poſſeſſed of but moderate abilities would not, I preſume, wiſh to *ſacrifice* them—if the originality of the paper is proved by the water-marks, &c. &c. it is very probable, that the autographs, ſeals, &c. are equally original. To be too credulous, I own is weakneſs; but to be incredulous where there are ſome very great appearances of truth, may well juſtify our calling the preſent the *Age of Infidelity*.

The uniformity which may be ſeen in all theſe papers ſuppoſed to be written by Shakeſpeare, ſhows the *improbability* of their being a fabrication; for though we ſometimes ſee the difference of the author's pens, and thoſe variations which the ſeveral periods of writing muſt occaſion, ſtill it is apparently the writing of *one* hand—if a forgery, it muſt therefore have been the work of *one* man, and what immenſe labour muſt it have coſt!——

Here I muſt take notice of Mr. Boaden's inſinuations, " Mr. Ireland is not an incurious man—he " draws, he engraves, he has a taſte for the black " letter;" and again—" He might have been " more circumſpect and rendered detection leſs " eaſy. It is, however, probable that eagerneſs to " execute what he had once planned, narrowed " his enquiries, &c.——" Surely Mr. Steevens, whoſe goodneſs of heart is equal to his ſenſe and judgment, muſt feel himſelf hurt in being addreſſed to, by a writer who wantonly attacks another's character. Is Mr. Ireland, becauſe he is verſed in antiquities, becauſe he has a taſte and abilities, to be accuſed of the intention of deceiving? Be the papers genuine or not, his intention, I am ſure, is good; and if they are not genuine, *he* muſt have been deceived himſelf. Had theſe papers fallen into the poſſeſſion of a man *without taſte*, they might ſtill have been in obſcurity; or had the owner entertained bad intentions, they might, for the ſatisfaction of ſome, have been ſuppreſſed. For my part, I am inclined to think the more favourably of the MSS. ſince eſpouſed by a gentleman of taſte and knowledge.

MS. OF KING LEAR.

BECAUSE this MS. does not agree with the printed copies, it is therefore diſbelieved by Mr. Boaden to be a copy *written* by Shakeſpeare; but I muſt agree with Mr. Ireland, in thinking this a very ſtrong argument in its favour: in this copy the author ſeems to have committed his ideas to paper with rapidity; his pen endeavours to keep pace with his thoughts, and all the *errata* are additional proofs of authenticity. Shakeſpeare, who wrote ſo much, muſt certainly have written in *haſte*, and very likely authoriſed his friends to make corrections. The want of *meaſure*, which Mr. Boaden takes notice of, is no argument againſt it. Dr. Johnſton's Tragedy of IRENE, was written at firſt like proſe. A Poet of Nature writes harmony at once; he goes by his *ear*, and does not reckon the lines on his fingers. The very quotations which Mr. Boaden makes from this MS. and compares with the printed copy, diſcover, in my opinion, the genuine work of the Poet. A fabricator, for fear of detection, would, in all probability, have been *too* correct. Mr. B. to ſhow his capability of judging, gives us the following *wiſe* remarks on theſe lines:

" And

" And, with *Adam-like* nakedneſs outface
" The wind and perſecution of the ſky."

" If this be meant for metre, it is diſſonance; if " it be given as an improved reading, it is folly; " when Adam was naked, the elements were yet " unagitated, and when Creation was puniſhed " for his tranſgreſſion, Adam was no longer na- " ked——"

How admirably argued this! but, pray, is an epithet to be ſtretched to a *whole* ſentence?— The application is to nakedneſs *only*; it is not *the wind and perſecution of the ſky were* LIKE ADAM—— As to the diſſonance of the line, we may find others elſewhere equally as bad; the beſt judges of verſification have made ſome deviations. Even Mr. Boaden himſelf, who is ſuch an advocate for lines *metrically ſmooth*, and who tells us, " So nice " and curious is Dramatic Poetry, that ſomething " is derived from the collocation of ſounds, inde- " pendent both of juſtneſs in the ſenſe and metri- " cal exactneſs in the numbers. The ſenſe with- " out this garb is not poetry, be it ever ſo preg- " nant, and though the ſyllables ſhould ſcan with " the utmoſt correctneſs, the requiſite number " would never conſtitute poetry unleſs they had " the glowing diction which reſults from the hap- " pieſt choice of words in the ſweeteſt conſonancy " of numbers——" Who that peruſes the laſt dra-

matic

matic production of this *competent* judge could ſuppoſe his knowledge ſo extenſive? Where is the *glowing diction* in the following lines, offered as *metre*, of a letter, read *three times* in the courſe of *three acts*?

" To Ratibor.
" All is accompliſhed.
" The deadly mixture is, by your command,
" Infuſed, and Ida adminiſters the draught."
SECRET TRIBUNAL.

Where is alſo the happy choice of words, and ſweet conſonancy of numbers in the following—another extract from the ſame?

" Health and lengthened happineſs of life,
" Attend my much rever'd and valu'd friends.
" We feel this honour ſenſibly, my lord,
" May we indulge a hope, your aunt recovers?

From a peruſal of this author's works, *may we indulge a hope* HE'LL WRITE LIKE SHAKESPEARE?

Non poſſumus videre noſtra mala,
Alii ſimul delinquunt cenſores ſumus.
" Though our own faults we never can deſcry,
" We ſee another's with the quickeſt eye."

As to *when* KING LEAR was written, the moſt knowing of all Shakeſpeare's expoſitors can never aſcertain the exact period; it might have been written

written many years previous to repreſentation, and the time of repreſentation can only be conjectured from circumſtances. In ſpite therefore, of Mr. Boaden's examination, theſe manuſcripts of *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, &c. MAY be genuine.

QUEEN ELIZABETH's LETTER

TO

SHAKESPEARE.

TO commit forgeries of Shakeſpeare, it certainly was not neceſſary to attempt an imitation of *Queen Elizabeth's* writing, &c. but this letter which is given as a further teſtimony of the others being genuine, has been it ſeems, the moſt objectionable, and the only place where Mr. Boaden ſeems to argue, is here; but, as I have before hinted, he *errs* in his arguments.

In

In this letter our Poet (then an Actor) is invited by Queen Elizabeth, to amuſe the Court at Hampton, during the holydays, particularly as Lord Leiceſter was to be there.

Mr. Boaden is ſatisfied in his own mind, that the lateſt period in which his Lordſhip could attend to ſuch entertainments was in 1585, at which time Shakeſpeare was only 21 *years* of age.

I will for a while ſuppoſe this aſſertion to be juſt, for the ſake of ſhewing, that even *then*, Shakeſpeare muſt have been a celebrated character, when according to Aubrey the Antiquarian, he came to London, and was an Actor about 18.—Thus it is recorded :——

" WILLIAM SHAKESPEAR's father was a " butcher ; and I have been told heretofore, by " ſome of the neighbours, that when he was a " boy, he exerciſed his father's trade ; but when " he killed a calfe, he could do it in *a high ſtile*, " and make a ſpeech. This William being in- " clined naturally to poetry and acting, come to " London ; I gueſs about 18, and was an actor at " one of the playhouſes, and did act exceeding well.

" well. He began early to make eſſays in * Dra-
" matique Poetry, which at that time was very
" lowe; and his playes took well. He was a
" handſome well ſhaped man, very good com-
" pany, and of a very ready, and pleaſant, and
" ſmooth wit."

If Shakeſpeare commenced actor about eighteen, and began early to make Eſſays in Dramatic Poetry, there is little doubt but that he acquired celebrity *before* he was twenty-one, particularly as *that time was very low*. If the invitation had then been ſent in 1585, where is the wonder?—Abilities like Shakeſpeare's, could never have been *three years* latent, eſpecially as the Engliſh Drama was then in a very humble ſtate: but though Mr. Boaden affirms that his Lordſhip could not attend to ſuch *holiday fooleries* after the above year, I am of opinion he might, eſpecially towards the latter end of his life, agreeable to the hiſtory of this Nobleman.

After the Earl's inglorious campaign, when he went over to Holland at the head of the Engliſh

* It appears from this, that a diſtinction was made between dramatic and other Poetry. There is no doubt therefore, but Shakeſpeare produced Plays before his Poem of *Venus* and *Adonis*. It is mentioned in the Companion to the Playhouſe, that he commenced Author without a PATRON.

auxili-

auxiliaries, having committed the government into the hands of the Council of State, and ſigned an act of reſtriction, whereby he reſerved to himſelf the authority over all the Governors of cities, provinces, and forts, and took from the Council of State ſeveral branches of its juriſdiction, he returned to England in 1586, and according to Camden, received "extraordinary favour" from the Queen. As he did not ſet out for Holland again till June 1587, he might in this interval have ſeen Shakeſpeare very often perform. His abſence now was only for *five* months, for he returned to England the November following, when Lord Buckhurſt brought a ſtrong accuſation againſt him at the Council Board, on account of his miſmanagement in the Low Countries; and here again he received "extraordinary favour" from the Queen, by being openly protected by her. At this period he might alſo have ſeen Shakeſpeare.

The Earl when made Lieutenant General of the army aſſembled at Tilbury, had no opportunity of exerting his military abilities, the Spaniſh armada being defeated and diſperſed, of courſe he was at liberty to indulge himſelf, and accordingly he did, for we find in Auguſt 1588, he repaired to his caſtle at Kenelworth (which he became poſſeſſed of through the liberality of the Queen), and

no doubt this was the time, when, according to Camden, he entertained Queen Elizabeth and the Court ſeventeen days "with all the varieties and "magnificence both of feaſting and ſhews, in "which time he ſpent 320 hogſheads of ordinary "beer." As the Queen received entertainments from the Earl, ſhe no doubt *gave* ſome, and in all probability invited Shakeſpeare to amuſe her favourite with *ſhews*; and why ſhould it be deemed impoſſible, that *this* invitation from the Queen to Shakeſpeare was ſent at this time, when our Bard had attained the age of twenty-four? The Earl's death was ſudden, (for which reaſon it was attended with ſome ſuſpicion of poiſon) therefore he might have ſeen Shakeſpeare play a very ſhort time before his death.

This letter being addreſſed to Shakeſpeare at the GLOBE by Thames, it is contended by Mr. Boaden that the *Globe* was not in exiſtence till 1596—he mentions the Water Poet as his authority, but does not give us the words. I wiſh he had, for I ſhould have been glad to have heard ſome of the eccentricities of TAYLOR. He bids us SEE his works, it is true; but there are few can tell WHERE. He alſo refers us to the contract between HENSLOWE and PETER STREETE, to build a Playhouſe in the year 1599, exactly ſimilar to that *newly erected* Theatre, called *the Globe* on the Bank.——I dare ſay

ſay DRURY-LANE will be called a NEW Theatre theſe twenty years to come. But if the NEW Globe was not erected till 1596, might not there have been an OLD Globe in 1585?—We read that "In 1603, a licence was granted under the Privy Seal, by King James I. to Shakeſpeare, together with Fletcher, Philips, Hemmings, Condel, Burbage, &c. authorizing them to act plays, not only at their USUAL houſe, the GLOBE, on the Bankſide, Southwark, but in any other part of the kingdom." From the word USUAL, Shakeſpeare muſt certainly have been *accuſtomed* to this place. It was from this licence, that the performers were firſt of all called *His Majeſty's Servants;* for we read alſo, that *long before this*, they were called the *Servants of the Lord Chamberlain.*—When Shakeſpeare commenced author, (and according to Aubrey, he was author of *Dramatique* Poetry at a very *early age*) there were ten Theatres open—ſix that were ſtiled public Theatres, and four private houſes; and is it not natural to ſuppoſe the Globe was one, eſpecially as it is ſaid, that "moſt, if not ALL of "Shakeſpeare's Plays were performed at the "Globe, which was an hexagonal building, "partly open to the weather, and partly covered "with reeds. Here they performed by daylight, "and by candlelight at BLACKFRIARS, which was "a *private* Playhouſe."

That there was ſome kind of a Theatre in Southwark, (when Shakeſpeare commenced actor) is evident, from the few anecdotes we have of Ben Jonſon, who went on the ſtage at the *ſame time*, and performed at a Theatre in SOUTHWARK. But why was this *new* building called the GLOBE?—A *Globe*, I underſtand to be a round body, having every part of its ſurface equally diſtant from the centre—an *hexagonal* edifice could not with much propriety derive this name from its form, and I doubt if it was a *regular hexagon*. The Theatre in Shoreditch was called the *Curtain*, a name evidently derived from the *Stage*, and as the Stage is an epitome of the "Great GLOBE itſelf;" it is not at all unlikely that Shakeſpeare ſhould make it the *general* appellation of whatever Theatre he was concerned in:—whether on the BANKSIDE or BLACKFRIARS. He himſelf ſaid——

"All the World's a Stage,"

and would conſequently repreſent the Stage a *World* in miniature.

But there is another conjecture. The Playhouſes in thoſe days were, if not always, at leaſt, generally in *Gardens*; and it is very likely, particularly as they performed in the day-time, that there was ſome inn, tavern, or public-houſe adjoining; which, either from a *ſign*, (ſigns being very

very common in thoſe days) or ſome other cauſe, received the name of *the Globe*—a name which belongs to ſeveral taverns to this preſent day. What renders this conjecture very probable, is, that the ROSE Theatre moſt indubitably derived its name from a tavern or public houſe—the name of the *Globe* might therefore originally belong to ſome inn or the like; and conſequently the Theatre, be ſo called, whether NEW or OLD, and the company of performers, though at Blackfriars, be known alſo by the name of the *Globe Company*.

I mention theſe conjectures, which I truſt will be found as reaſonable as any on the other ſide,—to ſhow how preſumptuous the aſſertion—"there "was no Theatre called *The Globe*, at that period."

SHAKESPEARE'S LOVE LETTER

AND

LOCK OF HAIR.

IF an original, this Love Letter is a precious relic, and though ridiculed by Mr. Boaden, I think it by no means unlikely to be both the *genuine* writing and

and ſtyle of our Bard, particularly from a circumſtance overlooked by Mr. Boaden—*the Lock of Hair which accompanies it.* Wonderful ingenuity and talents muſt they have had indeed, who could have continued and executed ſuch a variety of matter. The author (ſays Mr. Boaden) muſt have been ſixteen years of age when he wrote this letter; I dare ſay it was produced at a very early age—this therefore renders it more valuable—but, continues he, "it is utterly diſſimilar from the only ſpecimen "of his epiſtolary ſtyle which he has left us"—and then refers us to his DEDICATIONS to SOUTHAMPTON. It was the faſhion, I acknowledge, to *court* PATRONS, but I never underſtood they were courted and addreſſed with all that tenderneſs and ſolicitude which mark the *billet doux* of Cupid—though he was *inſcribing* his *Lock of Hair* to the Lady, I would have doubted the truth, had he uſed the common language of a DEDICATION.

LETTER

LETTER TO LORD SOUTHAMPTON, &c.

MR. BOADEN thinks the application of *his Grace* to an Earl, was not the formulary of that time. I am of opinion theſe ceremonies were ſo extenſive, that they had no formulary. The title of *Grace* however, is very ancient, and it was formerly given to Majeſty—the phraſe implies *great goodneſs, &c.* and therefore might be uſed by Shakeſpeare as a particular mark of reſpect. The addreſs, *My Lord*, is not ſo very *recent* as Mr. Boaden thinks; in the *Secret Hiſtory of Queen Elizabeth*, publiſhed ſome ſhort time after her death, we may find it uſed in the then converſation.

The reply to this Letter from the Earl, ſeems to have poſed Mr. Boaden, as he leaves it to the inveſtigation of another. There is more modeſty in this than any other part of the letter, and no doubt as it has puzzled Mr. Boaden, but others will find it equally difficult. Hence it appears, the matter requires conſideration, and no man of courſe, ſhould draw *haſty* concluſions; for my part the evidences are ſo various and ſtriking, that I confeſs myſelf inclined to give them credit; but perhaps I am one of thoſe *careleſs* readers, who,

Mr.

Mr. Boaden hints, may at firſt view be taken with the amazing plauſibility of the manuſcripts, as they are cloathed in a faſhion of orthography, which ſome may think ancient, becauſe obſcure; and genuine, becauſe unuſual. I confeſs myſelf an ordinary judge indeed, ſuch who believes the obſcure and unuſual ſpelling, an evidence of originality and the antiquity of the fifteenth and ſixteenth centuries, more eſpecially as the monoſyllables abound in letters, that being, as I have witneſſed in old manuſcripts, a *remarkable abſurdity* of the age.

It is impoſſible for the profoundeſt of all Shakeſpeare's EXPOSITORS to judge *before* the repreſentation of the Plays in queſtion, and indeed theſe Plays ſhould be ſeen three or four times ere an abſolute opinion be formed. I dare ſay, if one of them happened to be *Macbeth*, and totally unknown to us (though one of the now eſteemed productions of that great Bard) that the riſing of the witches in the firſt ſcene would create univerſal laughter, and the *diſcerning Critics*, out of reſpect to Shakeſpeare's name, might be tempted to drive the *Weird Siſters* off the Stage!

As to the familiarity of ſtyle, which Mr. Boaden obſerves, I think it correſponds very much with Shakeſpeare's epiſtolary writing—for inſtance—thoſe letters which he introduces in his Plays.

LETTER

LETTER TO COWLEY,

AND FAC SIMILE *of a Pen Drawing, or* SKETCH *of* SHAKESPEARE, *with his Arms and Creſt, Two Signatures of his Name, &c.*

CONCERNING this letter, which is remarkable for its accompaniments, Mr. Boaden obſerves, that on the authority of the firſt artiſts of the country, theſe Pen and Ink Drawings are modern ;—this is very extraordinary, for I have been told by the *firſt artists* likewiſe, that they have every teſt of antiquity. If Mr. Boaden had mentioned the Gentlemen's names who had made this oppoſite aſſertion, I flatter myſelf I could have mentioned others equally reſpectable, and whoſe opinion in this reſpect, has confirmed mine, that the Papers, Letters, Fac Similia, &c. MAY, according to the BEST conjectures, be the *genuine* work of the ſuppoſed authors.

If this Picture was found 37 years ago, when a violent controverſy took place reſpecting the unlikeneſs of Shakeſpeare's *Busts*, it might have led to ſome kind of deciſion ; for I believe that matter ever remained

mained in doubt, it being ſuppoſed there was no original picture of the Poet in exiſtence. Now after ſuch a violent conteſt, would it not be DARING in any impoſtor to attempt a Portrait, or the outlines of this immortal Bard, and offer it as his *OWN?—Impoſture never undertakes any thing hazardous, but in a caſe of abſolute neceſſity, and here it was by no means expedient to add this, or even half of the multiform things produced—thoſe very articles which ſeem the moſt unaccountable, are, in my opinion, ſtrong evidences in favour. The works of an impoſtor are in general correct, and correſponding with facts—WELL KNOWN!

Preſuming that ſome remarks made in the controverſy above alluded to, are very proper to be obſerved on this occaſion, I ſhall give the reader a ſummary—it will tend to prove the abſurdity of *poſitively* ſpeaking on ſubjects of doubt and intricacy. The following was the firſt letter on the ſubject, dated May 30, 1759.

" A doubt of a new kind, and not unworthy of
" notice, has ariſen among ſome, whether the old
" monumental buſt of Shakeſpeare, in the col-
" legiate church of Stratford upon Avon, War-

* That Shakeſpeare had a taſte for drawing, no artiſt can doubt, who reads attentively ſome paſſages in his Plays.

wickſhire,

" wickſhire, had any reſemblance of the Bard:
" but I find not this doubt to have taken date be-
" fore the public regard ſhewn to his memory, by
" erecting for him the curious cenotaph in Weſt-
" minſter Abbey: The ſtatue in that honorary
" monument is really in a noble attitude, and ex-
" cites an awful admiration in the beholder; the
" face is venerable, and well expreſſes that intenſe-
" neſs of ſerious thought, which the Poet muſt be
" ſuppoſed to have ſometimes had.

" The face on the Stratford monument bears
" very little, if any reſemblance, to that at Weſt-
" minſter; the air of it is indeed ſomewhat
" thoughtful, but then it ſeems to ariſe from a
" chearfulneſs of thought, which, I hope, it will
" be allowed Shakeſpeare was no ſtranger to.
" However this be, as the faces on the two monu-
" ments are unlike each other, the admirers of that
" at Weſtminſter only, will have it, that the coun-
" try figure differs as much from the likeneſs of
" the original, as it does from the face in the Ab-
" bey, and ſo far endeavour to deprive it of its
" merit: this is a derogation I can by no means
" allow of, and that for the following reaſons:

" Shakeſpeare died at the age of 53. The
" unanimous tradition is, that by the uncommon
" bounty of the then Earl of Southampton, he

" was enabled to purchaſe an houſe and land
" at Stratford, the place of his nativity; to
" which place, after quitting the * public ſtage,
" he retired, and lived chearfully among his
" friends ſome time before his death. If we con-
" ſider theſe circumſtances aright, that Shake-
" ſpeare's diſpoſition was chearful, and that he
" died before he could be ſaid to be an old man,
" the Stratford figure is no improper repreſentation
" of him.

" The exact time when the country monument
" was now erected is unknown; but, I preſume, it
" was done by his executors, or relations, proba-
" bly while his features were freſh in every one's
" memory, and perhaps with the aſſiſtance of an ori-
" ginal picture too. Theſe are no unreaſonable ſup-
" poſitions, and which, I think, cannot eaſily be
" overthrown, eſpecially when corroborated (as I
" hope to prove they are) by the following obſerva-
" tion, not hitherto made, that I know of, by any one.

" Facing the title page of one of the folio edi-
" tions of Shakeſpeare's works, there is an head of
" him engraved by one Martin Droeſhout, a Dutch-
" man, and underneath this cut appear the fol-

* And it is ſuppoſed he quitted the ſtage when he was patronized as an author. The letter from Queen Elizabeth muſt, of courſe, have been *before* he had known Lord Southampton.

lowing

" lowing lines, written by Ben Jonſon, who per-
" ſonally knew, and was familiarly acquainted with
" our Poet.

" The figure that thou ſee'ſt here put,
" It was for gentle Shakeſpeare cut;
" In which the graver had a ſtrife
" With nature, to out do the life.
" O could he but have drawn his wit
" As well in braſs as he hath hit
" His face, the piece would then ſurpaſs
" All that was ever writ in braſs.
" But ſince he cannot, &c. *B. J.*

" In theſe verſes Ben plainly aſſerts, that if the
" engraver could have drawn Shakeſpeare's wit
" in braſs as well as he has done his face, the per-
" formance would have been preferable to every
" thing of the kind; a convincing proof how
" great a likeneſs he knew there was betwixt the
" Poet and that picture of him.

" Now, if we compare this picture with the face
" on the Stratford monument, there will be found
" as great a reſemblance as perhaps can well be
" betwixt a ſtatue and a picture, except that
" the hair is deſcribed rather ſhorter and ſtraiter
" on the latter, than on the former; and yet this
" difference will not, I dare ſay, be material
" enough to juſtify the doubt I have attempted
" to remove; and, if not, then I hope what I have
" here advanced will induce thoſe gentlemen,

" who

" who have not thought ſo well of the Stratford
" monument, to have a better opinion of it for the
" time to come.

" *Stratford upon Avon.* J. G."

This letter was immediately contradicted by another, the writer of which, like Mr. B. *inſisted*, without authorities, and gives his conjectures as plauſible facts.

" However ingenious and elaborate the diſſer-
" tation of J. G. to prove the ſtatue or effigy of
" Shakeſpeare in the church at Stratford upon
" Avon to bear a greater reſemblance of him than
" that in Weſtminſter Abbey, yet all his ſeeming
" plauſible reaſoning has little or no foundation
" in truth, and perhaps it may be hitherto un-
" known to many of your readers, that there is NO
" GENUINE PICTURE of Shakeſpeare exiſting, nor
" EVER WAS, that, called his, having been taken
" long after his death from a perſon ſuppoſed ex-
" tremely like him, at the direction of Sir Thomas
" Clarges, and this I take upon me to affirm as
" an abſolute fact: the lines he quotes from Ben
" Jonſon invalidate this aſſertion not in the leaſt;
" for if the above perſon, from whom the pic-
" ture was taken, ſo much reſembled this great
" Poet, the compliment of Jonſon will then eaſily
" be accounted for. However, if any doubt
" ſhould

" ſhould ſtill remain, it may not be unworthy the
" learned gentleman, who is ſhortly to favour the
" world with a correct edition of his works, and
" who alone is capable of it, to clear up this
" point and ſet it in a true light."

" *Crane Court, Aug.* 20. J. S."

To this J. G. returned a very laconic anſwer, and which I think not at all unapplicable on the preſent occaſion.

" I beg leave to let J. S. know, that *poſitive* aſ-
" ſertions *without proof*, are as little to be regarded
" as *probable conjectures*; and therefore unleſs he
" proves his own negative, that *there neither is, nor
" ever was any genuine* (I ſuppoſe he means *original*)
" *picture of Shakeſpeare*, his anecdote of Sir Thomas
" Clarges is nothing to the purpoſe, and my con-
" jectures, for aught he has hitherto proved to the
" contrary, have their foundation in *truth*."

" *Stratford upon Avon, Sept.* 15. J. G."

Now, from the preſent circumſtance, I believe there MAY be an original picture, or likeneſs, of Shakeſpeare; and, if ſo, J. S. like the generality of POSITIVE men, was in the wrong.

FAC

FAC SIMILE

OF

SHAKESPEARE's PROFESSION OF FAITH.

MR. Boaden deems this extraordinary relic a mere rhapſody, and gives a very ludicrous reaſon (I ſuppoſe he means it a *reaſon*) for declaring it not genuine.

" My reader will remember, that JOHN SHAKE-
" SPEARE, believed to have been the brother of
" our great poet, compoſed a paper of this nature,
" which the induſtry of the laſt editors recovered
" from oblivion.—There was no ſufficient reaſon
" to be aſſigned, why the pious diſpoſition of the
" Bard ſhould in ſo ſolemn a declaration of opi-
" nion be

" Lag of a BROTHER.—"

Here Mr. Boaden at once tells us, that *ſuch things have been*, and as I can ſee no reaſon, why diſgrace ſhould be attached to Shakeſpeare for being " Lag of a Brother," I am of opinion that *ſuch things* MAY *be* again.

As

As to Mr. Boaden's aſſertion, that there is no *belief*, only a *pious acquieſcence* in this PROFESSION OF FAITH, I muſt differ in opinion with him; for I think there is a ſtrong belief in the *reſurrection* and *immortality of the ſoul.*

I muſt acknowledge my antagoniſt's power of diſcrimination to be far ſuperior to mine; for really I cannot ſee that levity, to which he would fain allude, nor that nonſenſe he terms *exquiſite*; but perhaps *my* judgment is corrupted by the works of the "*preſent puny hour.*"

THE DISCOVERY,

DEED OF GIFT, DRAWINGS, &c.

A Diſcovery ſo great as this, muſt naturally excite curioſity, the WHERE, WHEN, and HOW are all natural queſtions. Mr Ireland communicates the following information: "He received them from "his ſon, a young man then under 19 years of

" age, by whom the diſcovery was accidentally " made at the houſe of a gentleman of conſider- " able property——" But this is not deemed a ſatisfactory account by ſome—the gentleman's name and place of abode are inquired: it ſeems, however, Mr. Ireland has *promiſed* not to give this information; and is it ſurpriſing, that a gentleman of *conſiderable property* ſhould, in ſuch a caſe as this, wiſh his name to be concealed? Though there are ſome fools of the day would boaſt of the treaſure, if found in their poſſeſſion; yet I am convinced, that many would be unwilling to become the very topic of public converſation—to be ſubject to the untimely viſits of impertinent curioſity, and loſe all comforts of retirement and eaſe. But what is worſe than all, to become, perhaps, the May-game of ſome diurnal print whenever there is a *lack of matter*, and be liable to all the paltry ſarcaſms and inſinuations of every miſerable paragraph writer. Are not theſe reaſons—ſtrong and ſubſtantial reaſons for any gentleman to wiſh concealment, and more particularly *now*, when there are ſo many unbelievers? Mr. Ireland is highly commendable for his ſecreſy, and every man of honour muſt applaud him.

Were theſe MSS. forged and impoſed upon Mr. Ireland, to be impoſed again upon the public, would not the ingenious contrivers have fixed upon

upon ſome old dwelling for the diſcovery? this certainly would have been their firſt conſideration: but as no boaſt is made of the place which had ſo long concealed theſe precious relics, certainly there is every appearance of honeſty throughout. As to Mr. Boaden's remark on the Chriſtian names of Mr. Ireland's ſon, I think it unworthy notice—"Criticiſm ſo deſpicably ſhallow! aſſertion ſo "miſerably fallacious!"

The next thing to be obſerved is, the "DEED "of GIFT to WILLIAM HENRY IRELAND, with "fac ſimile of his ſignature and ſeal, regularly at-"teſted. In which he gives to the ſaid IRELAND, "ſeveral plays, and ten pounds for a ring, in teſ-"timony of gratitude towards him, for having, "at the riſque of his own life ſaved that of "SHAKESPEARE, when drowning in the river "Thames."—Several learned gentlemen, I underſtand, who have examined the external evidences of this Deed, are aſſured of its being genuine, and a corroboration of the originality of all the other papers, &c. But Mr. B. who is more learned than all, ſees no *gift* in the Deed—ſome of the plays he obſerves were previouſly printed.—But the manner in which they were *then* printed, can by no means, I think, leſſen the donation. Shakeſpeare's MSS. were *ſtill* valuable. According to the beſt accounts, it does not appear that more

than eleven of Shakeſpeare's plays were printed in his lifetime, and we are further informed, that they were not reviſed by himſelf, nor even publiſhed under his own care, as he had always proved himſelf regardleſs of future fame: thus Dr. Johnſon writes on the ſubject, "More than has been "ſuffered by any other writer ſince the uſe of "types, has been ſuffered by Shakeſpeare, through "his own negligence of fame, or perhaps by that "ſuperiority of mind which deſpiſed its own per-"formances, when it compared them with its "powers——" But Mr. Boaden thinks, being printed, they muſt have been unproductive; he judges of paſt times, it ſeems, by the preſent, imagining the ſame emolument to have been derived from dramatic productions which is now acquired. It is impoſſible for any perſon to ſay whether they were productive or not. At ſome future period they might have been *out of print*, and of courſe muſt have been productive then: in ſhort, benefits might have ariſen from the poſſeſſion of them, which we at preſent are not aware of; but let us ſuppoſe them unproductive, are there not many things given to a friend in order to remember the donor—not given with a view to be diſpoſed of, but to be kept as a token of friendſhip? Among theſe gifts is the MS. of KING LEAR, which Mr. B. inſiſts was not *then* written. I have already noticed this bold aſſertion, and muſt add,

that

that it was very natural *King Lear* was written long before it was reprinted, it being a ſubject that required inveſtigation; for Shakeſpeare, no doubt, conſulted more authors than *Geofrey of Monmouth*, and whatever references to after times may appear, might probably have been owing to future additions and improvements. *Midas* was rendered into various ſhapes by the author, whoſe amanuenſis declared that the laſt copy had very little reſemblance of the firſt.

We are alſo preſented with tributary lines to the ſaid Ireland, with the arms of Ireland and thoſe of Shakeſpeare, linked together by a chain, rudely ſketched by himſelf; alſo, pen ſketches of Ireland's houſe, Blackfriars, the arms of both, two ſignatures of Shakeſpeare, &c. &c. Such numerous little things as theſe are very unlikely to be the work of art—NATURE more probably was the parent. Their trivialneſs beſpeaks them not the produce of deception; for impoſture adheres only to the abſolute eſſentials which promote its deſign: it ſeldom clogs its purpoſe with a maſs of trifles, and that for two excellent reaſons, firſt, Time and opportunity will not admit of them; and, ſecondly, The apprehenſions of detection forbid them. All theſe things conſidered together, prove, of courſe, the great probability of theſe MSS. being genuine, and the great improbability of their being an impoſition.

We

We are alſo preſented with a rude Drawing (ſuppoſed to be of Shakeſpeare himſelf in the character) of Baſſanio, and another of Shylock; theſe Mr. Boaden thinks will find critics in every artiſt; but the opinion of artiſts is, that drawing in colours and on paper is very ancient. In a Treatiſe on Drawing we read,

"There is reaſon to believe that amongſt the "firſt eſſays of human ſkill, the art of drawing "had a principal place; as it is natural for the "hand to form ſome kind of imitation of what the "eye beholds, it may be ſuppoſed that the ſame "fertile imagination which could invent inſtru-"ments of muſic, was not deſtitute of pictureſque "ideas: and that the ſame hardy ingenuity which "could form into various utenſils the maſſy ore, "might likewiſe poſſeſs talents ſufficient for the "application of colours, which required neither "toil nor ſtrength to procure, but were preſented "by liberal nature upon the ſurface of the earth. "If this ſuppoſition is juſt, the arts may claim an "origin of remoteſt antiquity; it is certain they "were employed by mankind wherever we can "trace the progreſs of ſcience, and long before any "period to which our reſearches can attain."

Drawing is likewiſe remarked to have been the favourite amuſement of POETS, and no doubt ſuch a genius

a genius as Shakeſpeare, made it occaſionally his cloſet entertainment. No impoſtor, I think, (as it could by no means aſſiſt his purpoſe) would attempt a repreſentation of the ſtage dreſſes at that time.

AGREEMENTS, RECEIPTS, &c.

MR. BOADEN thinks that in Shakeſpeare's time, they played upon *ſhares*, according to the preſent mode of ſome of our country Theatres. I dare ſay there *were* Theatres on that plan, but muſt think Shakeſpeare, from the habit of playing before the Queen, adopted *ſalaries*—indeed I make no doubt of it, as I find his *ſucceſſors* did, and therefore conclude it originated from the inventive genius of Shakeſpeare. As to the figures denoting *pounds* and *ſhillings*, I preſume, it was optional then—no regularity as I can diſcover, was obſerved in accompt books till this century.

If Lowine did perform at the age of nine years, I can ſee no great wonder—we have *younger* performers at preſent, and it is very natural to ſuppoſe,

poſe, on account of the *then* ſcarcity of actors, and particularly the ſeveral juvenile characters which Shakeſpeare introduced in his Plays, that ſome of their performers were even *under* twelve years of age.

DEED OF TRUST

TO

J. HEMYNGE.

AS this Deed depreciates the character of Shakeſpeare in ſome reſpects, and varies from his laſt Will and Teſtament, it is therefore the more unlikely to have been the work of an impoſtor—to enquire whether it was rendered null and void by his Stratford Will, would be only loſing time—it is moſt probable it was, and perhaps on that account has been thus *thrown aſide*.

Mr. Boaden alluding to the Stratford Will, ſays, " The only property Shakeſpeare then recollected in " London, was a tenement wherein one John Robinſon

binſon dwelt, near the Wardrobe in the Black Friers;" but Mr. Boaden has certainly overlooked what immediately follows—"All *other* my lands, "tenements, and hereditaments *whatſoever*;"—of courſe, there might have been other property not *particularized*. I ſhall ſubjoin a copy of this Stratford Will, as I think it may convince the reader its *undoubted* author and the *doubted* author of the *Profeſſion of Faith*, may in all probability be one and the ſame. It will likewiſe ſhew a *familiarity of ſtyle* which was then in uſe.

COPY OF SHAKESPEARE's STRATFORD WILL,

EXTRACTED FROM THE REGISTRY OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

Viceſimo quinto die Martii Anno Regni Domini noſtri Jacobi nunc Regis Angliæ, &c. decimo quarto & Scotiæ quadrageſimo nono, Anno Domini 1616.

"IN the name of God, Amen. I William "Shakeſpeare, of Stratford upon Avon, in the "county of Warwick, gent. in perfect health and "memory, God be praiſed, do make and ordain "this my laſt will and teſtament, in manner and "form following; that is to ſay:

" First, I commend my ſoul into the hands of " God my Creator, hoping and aſſuredly believ- " ing, through the only merits of Jeſus Chriſt my " Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlaſting; " and my body to the earth whereof that is made.

" Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter " Judith, one hundred and fifty pounds of lawful " Engliſh money, to be paid unto her in manner " and form following; that is to ſay, one hundred " pounds in diſcharge of her marriage portion, " within one year after my deceaſe, with conſide- " ration after the rate of two ſhillings in the " pound, for ſo long as the ſame ſhall be unpaid " unto her after my deceaſe; and the fifty pounds " reſidue thereof, upon her ſurrendering of, or " giving of ſuch ſufficient ſecurity, as the over- " ſeers of this my will ſhall like of, to ſurrender " or grant all her eſtate and right that ſhall de- " ſcend or come unto her after my deceaſe, or that " ſhe now hath of, in, or to one copyhold tene- " ment, with the appurtenances lying and being " in Stratford upon Avon aforeſaid, in the ſaid " county of Warwick, being parcel or holden of " the manor of Rowington, unto my daughter " Suſannah Hall, and her heirs for ever.

" Item, I give and bequeath unto my ſaid " daughter Judith one hundred and fifty pounds " more,

" more, if ſhe, or any iſſue of her body, be living
" at the end of three years next enſuing the day of
" the date of this my will, during which time my
" executors to pay her conſideration from my de-
" ceaſe according to the rate aforeſaid: and if ſhe
" die within the ſaid term without iſſue of her
" body, then my will is and I do give and be-
" queath one hundred pounds thereof to my niece
" Elizabeth Hall, and the fifty pounds to be ſet
" forth by my executors during the life of my ſiſ-
" ter Joan Harte, and the uſe and profit thereof
" coming, ſhall be paid to my ſaid ſiſter Joan, and
" after her deceaſe the fifty pounds ſhall remain
" amongſt the children of my ſaid ſiſter, equally
" to be divided amongſt them; but if my ſaid
" daughter Judith be living at the end of the
" ſaid three years, or any iſſue of her body, then
" my will is, and ſo I deviſe and bequeath the ſaid
" hundred and fifty pounds to be ſet out by my
" executors and overſeers for the beſt benefit of
" her and her iſſue, and the ſtock not to be paid
" unto her ſo long as ſhe ſhall be married and
" covert baron; but my will is that ſhe ſhall have
" the conſideration yearly paid unto her during
" her life, and after her deceaſe the ſaid ſtock and
" conſideration to be paid to her children, if ſhe
" have any, and if not, to her executors and
" aſſigns, ſhe living the ſaid term after my de-
" ceaſe; provided that if ſuch huſband as ſhe ſhall

" at the end of the ſaid three years be married " unto, or at, and after, do ſufficiently aſſure un- " to her, and the iſſue of her body, land anſwer- " able to the portion by this my will given unto " her, and to be adjudged ſo by my executors " and overſeers, then my will is, that the ſaid " hundred and fifty pounds ſhall be paid to ſuch " huſband, as ſhall make ſuch aſſurance, to his " own uſe.

" Item, I give and bequeath unto my ſaid ſiſter " Joan twenty pounds, and all my wearing appa- " rel, to be paid and delivered within one year " after my deceaſe; and I do will and deviſe unto " her the houſe with the appurtenances in Strat- " ford, wherein ſhe dwelleth, for her natural life, " under the yearly rent of twelve-pence.

" Item, I give and bequeath unto her three " ſons, William Hart, ——- Hart, and Michael " Hart, five pounds apiece, to be paid within one " year after my deceaſe.

" Item, I give and bequeath unto the ſaid Eli- " zabeth Hall all my plate that I now have, ex- " cept my broad ſilver and gilt boxes, at the date " of this my will.

" Item,

" Item, I give and bequeath unto the poor of " Stratford aforeſaid, ten pounds, to Mr. Tho- " mas Combe my ſword, to Thomas Ruſſel, Eſq. " five pounds, and to Francis Collins of the bo- " rough of Warwick, gent. thirteen pounds, ſix " ſhillings, and eight-pence, to be paid within one " year after my deceaſe.

" Item, I give and bequeath to Hamlet Sadler " twenty-ſix ſhillings, eight pence to buy him a " ring; to William Reynolds, gent. twenty-ſix " ſhillings, eight pence to buy him a ring; to my " godſon, William Walker twenty ſhillings in " gold; to Anthony Naſh, gent. twenty-ſix ſhil- " lings eight pence; and to Mr. John Naſh, " twenty ſix ſhillings, eight pence; and to my " fellows John Hemynge, Richard Burbage, and " Henry Cundell, twenty ſix ſhillings eight pence " apiece to buy the rings.

" Item, I give, will, bequeath, and deviſe unto my " daughter Suſanna Hall, for the better enabling " of her to perform this my will, and towards the " performance thereof, all that capital meſſuage or " tenement, with the appurtenances in Stratford " aforeſaid, called the New Place, wherein I now " dwell, and two meſſuages or tenements, with the " appurtenances, ſituate, lying, and being in Henley " Street within the borough of Stratford aforeſaid;

" and

" and all my barns, ſtables, orchards, gardens,
" lands, tenements, and hereditaments whatſoever,
" ſituate, lying, and being, or to be had, reſerved,
" preſerved or taken within the towns, hamlets,
" villages, fields, and grounds of Stratford upon
" Avon, Old Stratford, Buſhaxton, and Wel-
" combe, or in any of them, in the ſaid county of
" Warwick; and alſo all that meſſuage or tene-
" ment, with the appurtenances, wherein one
" John Robinſon dwelleth, ſituate, lying, and
" being in the Black-Friars in London, near the
" Wardrobe; and all other my lands, tenements,
" and hereditaments whatſoever; to have and to
" hold all and ſingular the ſaid premiſes, with their
" appurtenances, unto the ſaid Suſanna Hall, for
" and during the term of her natural life; and after
" her deceaſe to the firſt ſon of her body, lawfully
" iſſuing, and to the heirs males of the firſt ſon
" lawfully iſſuing; and for default of ſuch iſſue, to
" the ſecond ſon of her body lawfully iſſuing, and
" to the heirs males of the body of the ſaid ſecond
" ſon lawfully iſſuing; and for default of ſuch
" heirs to the third ſon of the ſaid Suſanna law-
" fully iſſuing, and of the heirs males of the body
" of the ſaid third ſon lawfully iſſuing; and for
" default of ſuch iſſue, the ſame to be and remain
" to the fourth, fifth, ſixth, and ſeventh ſons of
" her body lawfully iſſuing, one after another, and
" the heirs males of the bodies of the ſaid fourth,

" fifth,

" fifth, ſixth, and ſeventh ſons lawfully iſſuing,
" in ſuch manner as it is before limited to be and
" remain to the firſt, ſecond, and third ſons of her
" body, and to their heirs males; and for default
" of ſuch iſſue, the ſaid premiſes to be and remain
" to my ſaid niece Hall, and the heirs males of her
" body lawfully iſſuing; and for default of ſuch
" iſſue, to my daughter Judith, and the heirs
" males of her body lawfully iſſuing; and for de-
" fault of ſuch iſſue, to the right heirs of me the
" ſaid William Shakeſpeare for ever.

" I give unto my wife my brown beſt bed with
" the furniture.

" Item, I give and bequeath to my ſaid daugh-
" ter Judith my broad ſilver gilt bole. All the
" reſt of my goods, chattels, leaſes, plate, jewels,
" and houſhold ſtuff whatſoever, after my debts
" and legacies paid, and my funeral expences diſ-
" charged, I give, deviſe, and bequeath to my
" ſon-in-law, John Hall, gent. and my daughter
" Suſanna his wife, who I ordain and make exe-
" cutors of this my laſt will and teſtament. And
" I do entreat and appoint the ſaid Thomas Ruſ-
" ſel, Eſq. and Francis Collins, gent. to be over-
" ſeers hereof. And do revoke all former wills,
" and publiſh this to be my laſt will and teſta-
" ment. In witneſs whereof I have hereunto put

" my

" my hand, the day and year firſt above-written,
" by me,

" WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

" *Witneſs to the publiſhing hereof,*

" Fra. Collins,
" Julius. Shaw,
" John Robinſon,
" Hamlett Sadler,
" Robert Whattcott.

" *Probatum coram Magiſtro William Byrde Legum Doc-*
" *tore Commiſſario, &c. viceſimo ſecundo die Menſis*
" *Junii Anno Domini*, 1616. *Juramento Johannis*
" *Hall unius ex. et cui, &c. de bene et jurat reſervata*
" *poteſtate et Suſannæ Hall alt. ex. &c. cu vendit, &c.*
" *petitur.*"

PROMISSORY NOTE TO HEMYNGE.

THIS note being an acknowledgment for ſervices received of Hemynge by Shakeſpeare in 1589, is objected to; becauſe in that year Hemynge married, and *of courſe* was not at leiſure to ſerve

ſerve Shakeſpeare either at the Globe or Stratford: Mr. Boaden ſhould have given ſome examples of this *extraordinary complacency* in ancient huſbands: the ladies, I am ſure, would have been thankful if he had; for they might have ſerved as leſſons for *modern ſpouſes*, who, I am perſuaded, are not ſo very uxorious as to decline, even during the *honey-moon*, an act or two of friendſhip. Now were we to conclude by ſome parts of hiſtory, we might ſay the gentlemen of yore were ſo indifferent about hymeneal happineſs, that they neglected no buſineſs whatever for their wives; and I am told, that even to this day there are *ſome* huſbands ſo ill-natured as not to ſuffer *female converſation* to interfere with buſineſs. But admitting Mr. Hemynge to be the fondeſt, kindeſt, and moſt complaiſant huſband wife was ever bleſt with, might not he have taken *his lady* with him? Surely *Mrs.* Hemynge might have taken a jaunt with her good man to Stratford. To avert this ſuppoſition, Mr. Boaden ſhould have proved the weather very bad.——Forgive, reader, this incoherent ſtile, and impute it my *ingenious* antagoniſt's, whoſe arguments admit of no *ſerious* replies!

LEASE FROM SHAKESPEARE

TO

MICHAEL FRAZER, &c.

OF this Mr. Boaden ſays very little; his only objection is the mention of the Globe at *Blackfriars*; but from what I have already ſaid, I preſume the Globe company might have been any where, and moſt indubitably they performed at Blackfriars by candle light. In two centuries hence it may be diſputed whether *Drury-Lane* was ever in the *Hay-Market*, or Aſtley's Company at the Lyceum.

From a hoſt of evidences I confeſs myſelf inclined to think theſe papers genuine, and muſt obſerve, in the language of a very ingenious writer ſome few months ago on a ſimilar caſe, that " the exiſtence of demonſtrable proofs are not " always neceſſary to impreſs belief. The united " rays of many probabilities very often amount " to an elucidation; and the collected feathers of " many inconſiderable arguments are often ſuf- " ficient to preponderate the ſcales of uncertainty.

" Let

" Let it alſo be remembered, that thoſe who have " the aſſiſtance of ocular evidence have, in caſes " like the preſent, an advantage that the greateſt " learning and the utmoſt ingenuity are not able " to ſupply."

Though Mr. Ireland's zeal in defending theſe papers have drawn upon him the ridicule of our would-be wits, ſtill I think it a commendable trait in his character, nor can I conceive that the compliments he has beſtowed upon the FATHER of the Engliſh Stage, amount to more idolatry than the laviſh praiſes of Sir William Davenport, Sir Charles Sidney, Dr. Johnſon, &c. nay even of modern writers. For example,

———" With mingled awe and love,
" I think of Him, the brighteſt ſpirit above,
" Who triumphs over time and fickle forms,
" The changes of caprice, and paſſion's ſtorms;
" Whoſe mighty Muſe the ſubject world muſt bind,
" While ſenſe and nature charm the willing mind.
EPILOGUE TO FENTAINVILLE FOREST."

Theſe words are ſuppoſed to come from Mr. Boaden's own lips as well as his pen, when his * SPIRIT eſſayed an imitation of Shakeſpeare; but that it was a mere *ſhadow* indeed

" *We need no* GHOST *to come and tell us* that."

* The Ghoſt in Fentainville Foreſt.

BOOKS WITH MARGINAL NOTES, &c.

WHAT ſtronger evidence can there be in favour of the MSS. than the preſent, of which Mr. Boaden takes no notice? Here is a catalogue of above eleven hundred books (ſuppoſed to be Shakeſpeare's library) with a great number of the books themſelves, filled with curious marginal notes, ſtrictly correſponding with the known autography of that illuſtrious Poet. Now, the complexion of the buſineſs is ſuch, that when ſeriouſly conſidered altogether, I think it morally impoſſible that any man, however ingenious and accuſtomed to art, could ever have completed ſo laborious an undertaking; for the uniformity of the hand-writing is throughout ſo apparent, that the authography muſt evidently have been the work of *one perſon only*.

The deſign of impoſture in general is to acquire a reward ſuitable to the danger incurred by its nefarious undertaking. But what was there to be gained by this? There was no certainty of ſucceſs, and much leſs of any emolument. How were theſe books collected, as well the paper and legal inſtruments? I cannot ſuppoſe that ſo many old books

books could have been *ſecretly* obtained; detection no doubt would have followed; the venders would have recollected them, and the matter be ſoon buzzed about. No ordinary reader, could have made the notes, nor no ingenious reader either, from a curſory view; then how much time muſt have been ſpent to a purpoſe very ambiguous? how much money expended, and upon what ſpeculation? for certainly any perſon capable of writing a Play, which reſembled in any degree the immortal Shakeſpeare, would much rather (where there was no hazard of riſking reputation, and ſome proſpect of acquiring fame) have ſent it avowedly to one or other of the managers (whoſe liberality to genius is well known) and ſubmitted it to the candour of an Engliſh audience, without expoſing it to *double* criticiſm. Who, in the name of Heaven, would have employed all their lifetime in a work of ſo much toil, and magnitude, where there was neither ſurety of ſucceſs, nor expectation of reward?

The writing in the books obviates all thoſe inſinuations, that art and chymical means might have been employed to have rendered it ſeemingly decayed. To effect this, every bit of the books muſt have been taken to pieces, and binding them over again would have conſequently evinced the deception.

Take

Take the whole maſs together, and is it reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that any man, or *ſet of men*, would have iſſued ſuch ſtrange fabrications, and ſuch multiform inventions, for the ſake of one object, which can only appear to view, viz. *Bringing out on the ſtage two manuſcript Plays, aſſerted to be written by William Shakeſpeare?* Where was the utility of the drawings, and thoſe ſeveral miſcellaneous papers to aid ſuch a deſign? for though they all ſerve to corroborate the opinion that they have been, *bonâ fide*, part of the toil and produce of our great Poet, they would never have ſtruck an impoſtor as coinage neceſſary for his purpoſe; he would have foreſeen the danger of venturing ſo deeply; he would have alſo been guarded againſt all work that would have admitted of a doubt: therefore the ſeeming inconſiſtencies in thoſe MSS. tend only to heighten the evidence in their favour. No man, from motives of impoſing a MS. as Shakeſpeare's on the public, would have attempted an imitation of Queen Elizabeth's writing, &c.—Earl of Southampton's, &c. &c. It was not only encreaſing the labour, but the danger of detection; therefore I think the argument of the improbability, nay, almoſt *impoſſibility*, of a fabrication, more ſtrong, and to the purpoſe, than ſaying, "If I "prove they are not genuine, they muſt of courſe "be forged——" for how are they to be proved not genuine? from *conjecture!* And I truſt that I

have

have proved that *conjecture* may be anſwered and contradicted by *conjecture* equally as fair and forcible. The moſt elaborate of all our commentators and expoſitors cannot aſcertain their remarks; how many have varied in their conſtructions of ſome parts of Shakeſpeare? And I warrant that ſeveral beauties were found in his Plays which were never intended as ſuch by the author, while paſſages which perhaps the author delighted in, have been overlooked by us. I reſpect the opinion of Doctor Johnſon; yet the Doctor has ſometimes been miſtaken: I reſpect the judgment of Pope; yet Pope's Shakeſpeare was reckoned the worſt, and that of Theobald's, the former hero of his Dunciad, preferred. And were all our former geniuſes now living, Swift, Samuel Johnſon, &c. &c. and were they to tell me theſe manuſcripts were not genuine, I would beg leave to judge *for myſelf*; it is a prerogative which I think belongs to the moſt common underſtanding; it is a prerogative which every true born Engliſhman ſhould maintain; and that man who obtrudes his opinion as the leader of all others, betrays more arrogance than ſenſe. Let Vortigern be tried by a JURY of *Boxes*, *Pit*, and *Galleries*; the verdict of "Genuine," or "Not Genuine," belongs to THEM only; and it is impoſſible to judge of a Play before repreſentation. We are told in Granger's Biography, (vol. ii.) in a note upon Shakeſpeare's Plays, that readers

ders and actors are incapable of judging thereof, till they are performed; for that the beauties of ſeveral of HIS dramas are not conſpicuous but on the ſtage; and this remark is very judiciouſly enforced by an obſervation, that ſeveral of his Plays were lying by till the good acting of Garrick reſtored them to the ſtage. We find Shakeſpeare, in his own time, was only celebrated as a DRAMATIC Poet. We ſhould not therefore decide too haſtily upon the fragments publiſhed—ſome, doubtleſs, of which were never intended for the public eye by Shakeſpeare, and therefore ſtronger evidences in the preſent caſe.

It muſt be owned, that Mr. Ireland, by the publication of thoſe fragments, evinces great ingenuity on his ſide; but we ſhould not from theſe *Data* preſume to anticipate the merits or demerits of either of the expected Plays. JOHN BULL is no *Calf* to be led away by every *Aſs*——He had rather, I dare ſay, (being an honeſt, uninfluenced, blunt character,) that VORTIGERN and the Play ſucceeding may be the genuine Works of SHAKESPEARE; that the Stage, too long diſgraced with pantomimes in proſe and metre, may reſume its wonted dignity, become the ſchool of genius again, and be no longer diſgraced with modern frivolities, the *comical* tragedies and *tragical* comedies of the day.

PRETENDED

PRETENDED IMITATIONS.

OUR diſcerning Critic, for ſuch he has the modeſty to name himſelf, concludes with what he calls Extracts from VORTIGERN: not the Play which is the ſubject of doubt, but Mr. Boaden's OWN Vortigern. This it is neceſſary to ſtate, becauſe a careleſs reader, from the artful manner in which it is diſplayed in the title-page, &c. may think it is the Play profeſſed to be Shakeſpeare's, and thence form a judgment of its merits: a circumſtance which would favour Mr. Boaden's deſign more than he or any other *diſcerning Critic* could otherwiſe effect. Is it for this purpoſe he produces theſe imaginary extracts? He ſays—no—it is becauſe ſome of his friends flatter him they are worthy to be collected, (for they have before this dignified ſome diurnal publication) and hence, ſays he, no argument can be drawn from the merit of theſe other MSS. as compoſitions, or in any wiſe from their reſemblance to Shakeſpeare, as a proof of originality—their reſembling in manner and ſtyle that of the great Bard, being no argument, becauſe HERE they are imitated. Flattery is certainly a very pleaſant thing, and far be it from the writer of this, to diſturb one who ſeems ſo happy

in it; and undiſturbed indeed ſhould he be, if he did not bring it with him into controverſy. Sure that which could induce any ſober man to ſuppoſe for a moment, that theſe alternately bombaſtic and grovelling extracts reſembled Shakeſpeare, muſt have been adminiſtered with a very ſkilful hand, or favoured with a good digeſtion on the patient's part. To this perhaps alluded the pſeudo Peter Pindar, (who failed totally in *his* imitation) author of the abuſive Poem of the CAP, which he awards to Mr. Boaden for having (in his own opinion) given BILLY the GO-BY—meaning, I ſuppoſe, his having *ſurpaſſed* WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. Were ſuch extracts as the *Vortigern of Mr. Boaden* produced by Mr. Ireland, as the production of the pen of Shakeſpeare, though there were a crowd of probable evidence to favour the opinion, impartial judgment could not heſitate to ſay, "You are an "impoſtor, or the dupe of one;" as ſuch he would be treated, no queſtion could be made of the matter: it bears too ſtrongly the character of a puny witling of the preſent time, to deceive for a moment. The reſemblance goes not beyond the ſhort-lived *pantomimical* tragedies of the day, which the genial warmth of managerial favour brings into exiſtence, only to be chilled by the froſt of popular neglect.

The

The only place where I can ſee any ſimilitude of Shakeſpeare, is in a few words of the ſecond line of the following, palpably borrowed from Shylock in his *Merchant of Venice*.—

" CONSTAS.—But thinke upon my Order and my Oathe!
" O laye *not perjurie upon my ſoule*,
" That, vow'd to Heav'n and nothing temporal,
" May not encline to your moſt friendly counſel. *page* 59

The ſoliloquy of Vortigern, wherein he modeſtly tells us, his deſigns are MOST MASTERLY EXHIBITED, is meant to be an imitation of MACBETH—but alas, when he mentions *pillow* and *downe*,

" BOADEN doth murder SLEEP."

The ſecond line in the following I dont think Mr. Boaden *reckoned on his fingers*, or he muſt certainly have had the misfortune of *loſing one*; and as to the fourth line, I think it every bit as bad as that in the MS. of *King Lear*, which ſo offended *his* ear.

" HENG.—For our religione, Kinge, knowe thatte wee wor-
" ſhippe
" *Woden eſpecially, who gives name*
" To the fourthe daye of everye weeke of time.
" *Nexte to himme we adore the Goddeſs* FREA,
" Fromme whome the ſixthe daye claimes ittes honoured
" name." *page* 65

Whoever wiſh to STEAL *diſcernment*, may contemplate the following lines:

" I hadde not hearde your Majeſtie ſoe farre,
" But thatte a moſt uſurpinge wonder *ſtole*
" *Diſcernmente* from youre lowly Servantes minde. *page* 67

——————" Bye the SAINTED CHAIRE
" Of holie Paule"——

I never read ſuch nonſenſe before!——

What *diſcerning Critic* could miſtake the font from whence theſe melodious lines have flowed—

" *Her breaſtes were two faire hilles, upon whoſe toppes*
" *The dazzlinge chaſtitie of ſnowe didde reſte:*
" *While from her eyes a holie fire did ſtreame,*
" *Thatte whyle it kindled flame in groſſer moulde,*
" *Left thoſe pure icye ſummits ever colde.*
" *Yette on her cheekes ſuch fluſhing brightneſs ſpreade,*
" *As the ſofte cloudes beare whenne the amourous ſunne*
" *Careſſeſſe them, and bluſhes painte the Weſte.* page 68

How different the orthography of this from the firſt quotation made from page 59. Even here Mr. Boaden wants uniformity.

Another *ſpecimen* of incongruity and bombaſt!

" *Mye father lookes but with Rowena's eyes,*
" *And they with murky frowns doe loure upon mee,*
" *Threateninge like heavy cloudes in ſummers haunche*
" *The nimble hatred of the lighteninges hidden!*

" Whatte

" What if I flye and hedde the Britaine bandes!
" *Howe Vortimer! a rebell to thy Kinge!*
" That Kinge a father too! O wretched ſtate!—
" O boſome, tortured betweene love and dutye!—
" Maye notte hoſtilitye at times be mercye,
" *As the wiſe Leeche from bodilye gangreene*
" *Preſerves the noble partes by amputatioun?*
" Hence to ARMORICA! *this truthe Ile ſhewe,*
" *A filial dutye in a ſeeminge foe!*
" Lette Heaven but ſhape mye endes!

The *wiſeſt* leech that can be found, deals more in *ſuction*, I preſume, than *amputation*; but this no doubt, is a *poetical licence* to make out the meaſure. If the two firſt words of the ſixth line had been tranſpoſed, would it not have read better? e. g. *Vortimer—howe?* &c.

In the next paſſage which is " FORCIBLY *to remind the reader of* AS YOU LIKE IT," we meet with the following elegant lines—but in theſe, I think the author has been more happy in imitating *Nat Lee* than WILL SHAKESPEARE.

" QUEENE.—*The ſtorme growes lowder, and the angrye*
" *heavens*
" *Doe write theire wrathe in characters of fire,*
" *The blinde might* reade and tremble."

Again,—

" The ſleepleſs windes
" Doe WALKE on their greate errandes."

Flattery

Flattery it muſt be indeed, that could tell any man that thoſe lines reſemble Shakeſpeare, and deciſive muſt the opinion of him be, who could be perſuaded by his friends, that there's the moſt diſtant ſimilarity to the manner—the ſtyle—or any thing wherein imitation can conſiſt. It would be an inſult on the commoneſt underſtanding to compare them. But how does he argue?—Let no reſemblance of the MSS. to the productions of Shakeſpeare be deemed a proof of originality, becauſe here follows an imitation."—Allowing all the merit which *his friends* attribute, or he himſelf believes; his modeſty here is very much to be praiſed. Every would-be imitator of Shakeſpeare has hitherto failed: Rowe, no deſpicable author, and who did not want to build his fame on ſo poor a foundation, wrote his *Jane Shore* profeſſedly with ſuch an intention; but though he produced a good Play, he did not ſucceed. Dr. Johnſon ſaid he did not produce the *leaſt* ſimilitude, and it was the Doctor's opinion, that no one in the world could produce a Play throughout like Shakeſpeare. I could mention ſome recent attempts, which inſtead of being imitations, have proved abſolute *parodies*, and confirmed the abſurd vanity (according to Mr. Boaden's paradox) of *imitating* the INIMITABLE. Then it ſeems it muſt have been reſerved for Mr. Boaden *alone* (at leaſt in the opinion of his friends) to effect that, which he thinks every attempt to accompliſh,

compliſh, has miſcarried—and certainly the public have to congratulate themſelves, if the MSS. in the poſſeſſion of Mr. Ireland are *forgeries*, that Mr. Boaden was not concerned in the buſineſs, for then detection would be vain. Who is bold enough to ſay that he could diſtinguiſh "the glowing diction" above recited—"that which reſults "from the happieſt choice of words in the ſweet-"eſt conſonancy of numbers, combining from the "ideas of the Poet, ſelected by character, and vi-"vified by genius"—from the Songs of the Swan ſweet Avon itſelf? unleſs ſome ſagacious elf would diſcover that the former was more of the *Gooſe!*

Surely Mr. B. ought not to argue from his *own* powers of writing like Shakeſpeare, that any other perſon can—certainly not—he ought to have a higher opinion of his own genius, than to meaſure that of others by ſuch a ſtandard. No perſon has yet lived who could do it with ſucceſs, except *him alone*; and as he profeſſes not to be the author of the Plays in queſtion, the concluſion will be a fair one; "That if the MSS. reſemble Shake-"ſpeare's ſtile, &c. they are original, and Mr. I. "no impoſtor, as Mr. B. would, with as much "politeneſs as ability, inſinuate——" Had any other perſon written ſo, it would be naturally ſuggeſted

geſted that his *anger* aroſe from a pique, that *he* was not made a confederate in the fabrication of the ſaid manuſcripts, and had given thus a ſpecimen of *his* ability to convince the perſons concerned of *their* folly in excluding him from their council. Or a more probable ſuppoſition, (one, I hear, that has gone abroad) is, that Mr. B. himſelf has found, or was about to find, ſome other manuſcripts of that Poet. The former would account for the reſemblance of his extracts, the latter for the virulence and inanity of the attack which he has made on the papers of Mr. Ireland. But, to be ſerious, the judgment of the public is not be led thus by every man who thus pleaſes to ſtand up—nominate himſelf a critic, and determine whether the manuſcripts are to be accepted as original, or condemned as ſpurious. The judgment of that man will have little weight who will in one moment ſay, "Such and ſuch are not like Shakeſpeare; but look here—here, I have written what breathes the ſpirit of that illuſtrious Poet——" Such preſumption and folly deſerve contempt and ridicule.

Allowing all that has been ſaid againſt the manuſcripts, the credit which the writer of the *Critical Examination* wiſhes, ſtill it reaches only to probability, which the intrinſic merit of the piece muſt immediately overturn; that merit, the only ſtandard,

dard, it will, or ought to be judged by: it is by this alone that it will ſtand or fall; no ſuch attack as that we have now examined will depreciate it—a Britiſh audience judge for themſelves; they will "Hear all, and then let juſtice weigh the ſcale."

"There are a ſort of men, whoſe viſages
"Do cream and mantle like a ſtanding pond,
"And do a wilful ſtillneſs entertain
"With purpoſe to be dreſſ'd in an opinion
"Of Wiſdom—Gravity—profound Conceit!
"As who ſhould ſay 'I am Sir ORACLE,
"And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!"

SHAKESPEARE.

FINIS.

FREE REFLECTIONS

ON

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS

AND

LEGAL INSTRUMENTS,

Under the Hand and Seal of

WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE,

IN THE POSSESSION OF

SAMUEL IRELAND,

OF NORFOLK-STREET.

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" If circumſtances lead me, I will find
" Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
" Within the centre." HAMLET.

To which are added,
EXTRACTS FROM AN UNPUBLISHED MS. PLAY,
CALLED
THE VIRGIN QUEEN.
WRITTEN BY, OR IN IMITATION OF,
SHAKSPEARE.

" Another yet ?——I'll ſee no more."
MACBETH.

LONDON :
PRINTED FOR F. G. WALDRON,
At No. 18, Prince's Street, oppoſite Gerrard Street, St. Ann's.
M.DCC.XCVI.

FREE REFLECTIONS,

&c.

IN "*A Letter to George Steevens, Eſq. by James Boaden, Eſq.*" juſt publiſhed, is the following acknowledgement; which ſo exactly deſcribes my own feelings in the ſame ſituation, that I take the liberty to adopt the very words.

"When a report firſt went abroad, that Mr. Ireland, of Norfolk-ſtreet, had made a diſcovery ſo important as the papers of Shakſpeare, the writer of theſe ſheets went to ſee them, and was very politely allowed by their poſſeſſor to hear him read them at leiſure. In ſome inſtances credulity is no diſgrace:—ſtrong enthuſiaſm is always eager to believe. I confeſs, therefore, that, for ſome time after I had ſeen them, I continued to believe them genuine. They bore the character of the poet's writing—the paper appeared of ſufficient age—the water-marks were earneſtly diſplayed, and the matter diligently applauded.—

To

To a mind filled with the moſt ardent love and the moſt eager zeal, diſarmed of caution by the character too of the gentleman who diſplayed them, it will not be a ſubject of ſevere reproof, that the wiſhed impreſſion was made.

I remember that I beheld the papers with the tremor of the pureſt delight—touched the invaluable relics with reverential reſpect, and deemed even exiſtence dearer, as it gave me ſo refined a ſatisfaction. He, who has long combatted with the arts of literary impoſture, may ſmile at the ſimplicity of this avowal, although he ſhould be unable to refuſe his praiſe to the candour by which it has been dictated."

Such were preciſely *my* feelings when Mr. Ireland did me the favour to ſhew me the papers, &c. adverted to; and I ſincerely hope, that nothing I may have occaſion to ſay concerning them, will be conſtrued into diſreſpect for him: their authenticity is now on trial at the bar of the publick, and every one is free to give evidence; as mine will be faithfully delivered, I truſt it will be favourably received.

Unſkilled as I am, the only doubt that ſtruck me, on hearing the papers read, was of the word *whymſycalle*; which, I then obſerved, I did not remember

remember to have met with at ſo early a period: this objection was ſoon overruled by the ſuppoſition that, as the word muſt have been produced at ſome period, Shakſpeare might then have coined it. I acquieſced, departed highly gratified, and in all other reſpects entirely ſatisfied.

In a converſation ſome time after, on the ſubject of theſe papers, with a gentleman of the ſoundeſt judgment, and beſt information, I hinted the doubt I had entertained of the word *whymſycalle*; he pronounced it too modern for Shakſpeare: which, recollecting the adage *ex pede Herculem*, cauſed me to look a little farther into the matter.

Moſt of the obſervations I made, many of which, Mr. Boaden having anticipated me in them, are omitted, I am proud to ſay, have been approved of by the gentleman alluded to. I ſubmit the following, therefore, with a reſpectful confidence, to the ſkilful in Shakſpearean lore; ſtimulated by an irreſiſtible impulſe to contribute my faint breath towards the diſpelling theſe newly-ariſen vapours: which, if ſuffered to condenſe, might dim the effulgence of Shakſpeare!

In

In page 1, following the preface to, "*Miſcellaneous Papers,*" &c. is ſaid, "for *I*, read *Aye: this was the Author's uſual mode of writing.*"—Mr. Ireland might have added, *and of every other Author at that period.*

The ſuperſcription of queen Elizabeth's letter to Shakſpeare, written with her own hand, is as carefully worded, as if it were to have been ſent by the penny-poſt; had the office ſo named been then eſtabliſhed. So far from directing a letter, Elizabeth wrote not the inward contents; that haughty perſonage was not in the habit of ſuch condeſcenſion: her ſignature only, or, on rare occaſions, an additional line, compriſed nearly the whole of her hand-writing, in any letter from her. In the letter the queen ſtyles him "*Maſterre* William;" the orthography of that age was *Maiſter*, from the old French *Maiſtre*, now written *Maitre*; the French having ejected the *s* from many words in which we, though they are derived from them, retain it. This Chattertoniſm occurs frequently in theſe wonderful, or rather blunderful, papers.

"50 *Poundes*" was a great ſum, at that period, to receive for playing "*before the Lorde Leyceſterre*;" although the "*Expenneces thereuponne*" amounted

amounted to "19 *poundes*:" and, per contra, "2 *ſhyllynges moure*" to "*Maſterre Lowinne*;" whom, in the "*Deed of Truſt to John Hemynge*," Shakſpeare terms "*oure beſt Actorr*;" was but a ſmall compliment * "*forre hys Goode Servyces and welle playinge*." Even the ſpelling of this celebrated actor's name is dubious: in the liſt of performers affixed to *Sejanus*, *The Foxe*, *The Alchemiſt*, and *Catiline*, (Ben Jonſon's Works, folio, 1616) his name is uniformly ſpelt *Lowin*: and, ſurely, the perſon who entered into a legal contract with him, as Shakſpeare is, in theſe papers, repreſented to have done, muſt have known the cuſtomary orthography of his name.

It may alſo be obſerved, that the well-known urbanity of Shakſpeare's mind, and ſuavity of his manners, could not have permitted him to affront the great Burbage, and other firſt-rate performers, by unneceſſarily ſtyling Lowin, however excellent, in a legal inſtrument of public notoriety, "oure *beſt* Actorr."

* I remark here, en paſſant, that *compliment*, in Shakſpeare's time, was uſed as a noun only; in queen Elizabeth's letter to him it appears as a verb.

"Letter to *Anna Hatherrewaye.*"

This female's names were *Anne Hathaway*. *Anna* is a Latin adoption of, comparatively, modern uſe; the orthography of *Hatherrewaye* is merely Chattertonian.

In the letter to her, a kingly crown is termed a "gyldedde *bawble.*" *Bawble* formerly meant the carved truncheon, with a fool's head at the top of it, uſed by court and ſtage buffoons; therefore a very unlikely epithet to be applied by Shakſpeare to the ſymbol of majeſty; to which he every where pays great reſpect.

In the "*Letter to the Earl of Southampton,*" we read "*itte is a Budde which Blloſſommes Blloomes*" &c. Shakſpeare was too good a naturaliſt not to know, that a *Bud* firſt *Blooms*, then *Bloſſoms*.

"tooe *ſublyme* a feeling," in the ſame letter, is a very queſtionable expreſſion.

The ſcrawl of this ſublime and blooming letter is what ſchool-boys call pot-hooks and hangers; and utterly unlike the hand-writing of that or any other age: and, if the ſignature be the autograph of *any* earl of Southampton, it is, I am informed, not that of Shakſpeare's benefactor.

In

In the "*Profeſſion of Faith,*" "*acceeded toe*" is a phraſe an hundred years too modern for Shakſpeare.

Towards the concluſion of the "*Profeſſion*" &c. *Chickenne* is uſed for the *Hen*, who receives her brood under her wings; on the propriety of which conſult the holy ſcriptures. *Chickenne* is alſo objectionable in this place as ungrammatical, it being uſed in the ſingular number; whereas, the old ſingular was *Chick*, and *Chicken* the plural. So *Ox*, and *Oxen*; *Cow*, and *Cowen*; contracted into *Kine*.

Kine is the plural of Kye or Keye still used for Cow in the North

In the "*Letter to Richard Cowley*" we read, "a *whymſycalle* conceyt;"—the word *whymſycalle*, or *whimſical*, as I have already ſaid, does not, I am aſſured, occur in or near that period. I have a little book, printed in 1631, entituled "*Whimzies*: or a New Caſt of Characters;"* which, though

* The following extract from the character of "*A Ruffian*," in this ſcarce book, as it relates to our ancient theatres, may not be unpleaſing.

"To a play they wil hazard to go, though with never a rag of money: where after the *ſecond Act*, when the *Doore* is weakly guarded, they will make *forcible entrie*; a knock with a Cudgell is the worſt; whereat though they grumble, they reſt pacified upon their admittance. Forthwith, by violent

though *Whim* muſt apparently have preceded, is the earlieſt inſtance I can recollect of any word like *whymſycalle*.

One might imagine, from the careful ſuperſcription of the letter to Cowley, that queen Elizabeth had condeſcended to direct that too.

The figure "*evidently meant for Shylock*" is repreſented with a blue cap on. Jews in Venice are obliged to wear a red cap or hat, as a badge of their perſuaſion. Shakſpeare, however, or the painter of this groteſque figure, might not be acquainted with the coſtume of that place and people.

In the "*Deed of Gift to Ireland*," after the word "*followithe*" are three conjunctive notes of admiration ! ! ! I believe two notes of admiration in conjunction have not been uſed till very lately. When the plays of "*Kyng henrye thyrde of Englande*," "*Kynge Hy* vii," &c. come to light, we muſt

aſſault and aſſent, they aſpire to the two-pennie roome; where being furniſhed with Tinder, Match, and a portion of decayed *Barmoodas*, they ſmoake it moſt terribly, applaud a prophane jeaſt unmeaſurably, and in the end grow diſtaſtefully rude to all the Companie. At the Concluſion of all, they ſingle out their *dainty Doxes*, to cloze up a fruitleſſe day with a ſinneful evening."

muſt not be ſurpriſed at finding in them the words *ſwindler*, *ſhawl*, and *Otaheite*; or the * * * * of *Triſtram Shandy*.

As Shakſpeare's *Tempeſt* and *Macbeth*, which were given to Cowley, were never printed till the folio, 1623, was put forth by Heminge and Condell; how chanced it that Heminge did not, having poſſeſſion of the "*Oakenn Cheſte*," with all the Plays therein, and being, we may imagine, on good terms with the party, prevail on "Maſterr Burbage," as he had done with Cowley, to permit him to publiſh "*ye Virginn Quene*" in ſaid folio?

For what reaſon did Heminge exclude from the folio Shakſpeare's "*newe Playe neverr yette imprynted called Kynge Hy VII*," which was "*toe bee whollye for ſd J. Hemynge?*" And why did not Heminge publiſh in that folio the "*Playe called Kynge Vorrtygerne*," and appropriate what the copy-right of it might then be deemed worth, to the uſe and advantage of "*thatt Chylde*" to whom it was aſſigned?

The play of "*Kynge henrye thyrde of Englande*" having, with "*Henry fowrthe*," "*Henrye fyfthe*," "*Kyng John*," and "*Kyng Leare*," been given by Shakſpeare to "*Maſterre William Henrye Irelande*;

lande; we may hope that Maſterre Samuel Ireland, or Maſterre Samuel-William-Henry Ireland, to whom we are obliged for the immaculate "*Kynge Leare*," will ſpeedily favour the publick with it: a play which Shakſpeare's "good and Worthye Freynd John Hemynge," to whoſe "honorr" he truſted, withheld, not only from a poor child, but from even himſelf, being already produced; the other hitherto-unheard-of play, coming within the family-compact, "*ſame name and arms*," &c. is ſurely a leſs difficult attainment: and I conclude that the "*more intereſting hiſtorical Play*," announced in Mr. Ireland's preface, is the play of "*Kyng henrye thyrde of Englande*."

Should any fortunate circumſtance reſtore to us "*Kynge Hy vii*," and who knows what induſtry and ingenuity may effect? we ſhall probably poſſeſs all the Dramas of Shakſpeare, hitherto mentioned; as the writer of theſe Reflections, or whatever they may be termed, is particularly acquainted with, and has great influence over, a now-living "*Maſterr Burbage*," lineally deſcended, we muſt ſuppoſe, from Shakſpeare's *Burbage*; through whoſe, or ſome other means, he doubts not he ſhall be enabled to recover an entire copy of "*ye Virginn Quene*:" from which he has already obtained a few extracts, ſubjoined to theſe remarks.

They

They are, for the reader's eaſe, though not perhaps the antiquary's gratification, diveſted of the ruſt of age; the redundant ſpelling: but, let not a ſeeming lack of years be any impediment to a reverend eſtimation.

The "*Tragedye of Kynge Leare,*" our Pſeudo-Shakſpeare ſays, "*Iſse fromme Maſterre Hollinneſhedde.*"

I have not a volume of that hiſtorian at preſent in my poſſeſſion; but, to the beſt of my recollection, the orthography of his name in the title-page to his works is much more ſimple.

The "Libbertye" he has taken, Shakſpeare adds, in having "ſomme lyttle deparretedde fromme hymme," "wille notte," he truſts "be blamedde bye" his "*gentle Readerres.*"

This is the firſt inſtance of Shakſpeare's appealing to *Readers*; in writing his Dramas it is well known that he thought only of *Auditors* and *Spectators*: — but, as it neceſſarily includes an implication that he had prepared this copy of "*Kynge Leare*" for the preſs himſelf, we might naturally expect the text to be correct; at leaſt intelligible; ſo far from which, it is, maugre Mr. Ireland's preface, the moſt incorrect, unintel-

unintelligible text I ever ſaw, in any copy of any play whatever: and, inſtead of ſuppoſing, as ſome may, Mr. Ireland, his ſon, or any other intelligent perſon, the fabricator; I ſhould rather imagine it to be really, and bona fide, an ancient copy; taken ſurreptitiouſly and erroneouſly, from the mouths of the actors, by ſome Printer's illiterate devil: to which had, for private purpoſes, been added an imitation of Shakſpeare's ſignature, and addreſs to his "*gentle Readerres.*"

Mr. Ireland ſays "that in the paper on which this play ["*Kynge Leare*"] is written, more than twenty different water-marks appear."

If this be meant as evidence of the MS. of "*Kynge Leare*" being the genuine production, and hand-writing of Shakſpeare; I doubt it will prove a weight in the oppoſite ſcale: when the opulent Shakſpeare, as he undoubtedly was when his *King Lear* was produced, ſat down to write a play, ſurely he was furniſhed with a quire or two of paper for the purpoſe; the ſheets of which would, of courſe, all bear the ſame water-mark: whereas, admitting the copy in queſtion to be an ancient, but ſtolen, one; a needy hireling, who could not afford better, may be ſuppoſed to have written on caſually-collected and variouſly-marked paper: and a modern fabri-

cator,

cator, for argument' ſake here imagined, would be compelled to collect old paper piece-meal; in all probability, containing "more than twenty different water-marks."

In "*Kynge Leare*" p. 4. we read,

"Ande the whorefonne muſt be acknowleggede."

Shakeſpeare, if we may credit "*The Deed of Truſt to John Heyminge*," could, like his own Portia, better teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow his own teaching; otherwiſe he might have recollected this paſſage in regard to "*thatte Chylde of whom wee have ſpokenn butt who muſt not be named here*;" and who, if ſuch "*Chylde*" ever exiſted, ſeems to have been one whoſe ſervices ſtood bound to *Goddeſſe Nature*.

The affectedly-antique ſpelling in "*Kynge Leare*" is, throughout, ſo unprecedentedly redundant, as, of itſelf, to be a convincing proof of inartificial imitation; but the ſpelling of the Latin verb in the quotation, p. 4. "*Gloſterre Exitte*," with the old Engliſh termination, the double *t*, and *e* final, is ſo very ridiculous, that, could it be proved to have been by Shakſpeare, we might hereafter ſay, that he had ſmall Engliſh and leſs Latin; as we have been taught by Ben Jonſon to ſay, that he had ſmall Latin and leſs

Greek: but, if he had any Latin, he muſt have ſpelt the word *Exit*, not *Exitte*. To have done, therefore, with "*Kynge Leare*," at leaſt for the preſent, the blunders, corruptions, omiſſions, interpolations, and ſophiſtications, warrant me in ſaying, that it is *impoſſible* for this MS. of "*Kynge Leare*" to have been the production and handwriting of Shakſpeare.

I fear I am not juſtifiable in commenting upon a ſuppoſed letter from Shakſpeare at Stratford, to a Printer or Bookſeller in London, read to me by Mr. Ireland, and not yet made publick, relating to the play of "*Vortygerne*;" which informs us, that the price required for this perhaps-invaluable Drama was demurred at by the ſordid trader, altho' the Poet profeſſes to think it one of his beſt productions: but I hope I ſhall be pardoned, even by the poſſeſſor of the letter, for obſerving that "*The Deed of Truſt to John Hemynge*", in which "*Vorrtygerne*" is given to the unnamed "*Chylde*", is dated 1611; and, that the correſpondence between the Author and Trader is, I believe, ſtated or imagined to have occurred after Shakſpeare's retirement from the ſtage, to paſs the calm evening of his days at Stratford.

Strange!

Strange!—that the good, the grateful, the generous Shakſpeare, ſhould give a "*Playe neverr yette Impryntedde*," to a certain "*Chylde & hys heires for everre*;" that he ſhould then ſet this very play to ſale for publication, at a period when the value of plays depended on their not being printed; and laſtly, that, although the writings of this unequalled genius were in his life-time preferred before all others, and this was eſteemed by him his beſt Play, his demand for it ſhould not have been "acceeded toe:" but, the immortal Shakſpeare be reduced to the humiliation of requeſting that his favourite Play, and the correſpondence concerning it, ſhould be tranſmitted to him at Stratford upon Avon!

"*The Deed of Truſt to John Hemynge*" and this degrading correſpondence, ſurely, contradict each other!—admitting the latter to be the fact, what was Shakſpeare to do with his admired Play at Stratford?—why not commiſſion the perſon with whom he had entruſted it, to deliver it to his friend Heminge; that it might be acted in London, or at Bank-ſide, for the author or *Chylde's* emolument?—and not have his darling "*Vorrtygerne*" thrown among lumber, in an obſcure country retirement, to periſh through the ignorance of his ſurvivors; or, be miraculouſly preſerved, unſeen, unheard-of, nearly two centuries: to enjoy, cum multis

multis aliis, a kind of reſurrection, in which the diſjointed fragments of our Poet's mental part are ſupernaturally gathered together, from "*mye Play offe Kynge Leare*" to a wager "*o 5 Shyllynges.*"

Having thus thrown out a few haſty reflections, I conclude with a ſincere wiſh; that, ſhould *Vortigern*, or any other play imputed to Shakeſpeare, poſſeſs merit enough to warrant the aſſumption; yet, by critical proceſs be proved a forgery; the ingenious impoſtor may be ranked with Chatterton in fame; but find better fortune than did that ill-fated, and ever-to-be-lamented youth!

EXTRACTS

EXTRACTS

FROM

THE VIRGIN QUEEN.

IN the "*Deed of Truſt to John Hemynge,*" publiſhed among the "*Miſcellaneous Papers,*" by Mr. Ireland, is the following donation from Shakſpeare.

"Toe Maſterr Burbage I give as followithe from the Cheſte afs$^{d.}$ mye two Playes of Cymbelyne & Othello together withe mye choſen Interlude neverr yette Impryntedd & wrottenn for & bye deſyre of oure late gracyowſe & belovedd Quene Elizabethe called y^{e} Virginn Quene & playde 3 tymes beſore herreſelfe att the Revells ye profytts from pryntyng ſame toe bee whollye for s$^{d.}$ Burbage & hys hrs ſhoulde hee thynke fyttenne ſoe toe doe."

It

It has been ſuppoſed, by ſome who were inclined to think the "*Miſcellaneous Papers*" genuine, that the Story of this choſen Interlude, as it is termed, of *The Virginn Quene*, related to the hiſtory of our Virgin Queen, Elizabeth, herſelf; but, a woman of her maſculine mind could not have endured to ſee herſelf pageanted in a Stage-play, or Interlude; and to have heard the fulſome adulation with which a drama, repreſenting her own life and actions, muſt have been fraught: no; common ſenſe aſſures us, that the ſtory muſt have been foreign to herſelf, and founded either on ancient hiſtory, romance, or fable; or, that it was invented by the poet.

The MS. from which the ſubjoined extracts are taken puts the matter out of doubt; *The Virgin Queen* being an evident Sequel to *The Tempeſt*; and *Claribel*, a character therein, who was married to the *King of Tunis*, being, for reaſons which are developed in the Drama, The *Virgin* Queen; that it was written by Shakſpeare I will not take upon me to aſſert; yet, it is not likely that any other perſon ſhould attempt a Sequel to what ſeemed ſo perfectly concluded as doth the Tempeſt: but, I may ſafely ſay, that if it was not written by Shakſpeare, it is written in direct imitation of him.

Neither

Neither will I aſſert that it is the identical Interlude or Play mentioned in the "*Deed of Gift*;" for, I frankly acknowledge I had not theſe extracts from Mr. Ireland: they have been in their preſent owner's poſſeſſion twenty years; and the contents of the "*Miſcellaneous Papers*" may not have been in any body's poſſeſſion twenty months.

The play of *The Virgin Queen*, being, as hath been mentioned, a ſequel to *The Tempeſt*, reſumes the ſtory juſt where it broke off; and opens, on the morning ſubſequent to the meeting and reconciliation of the Iſlanders and the Neapolitan Voyagers, with an Invocation by Ariel of the Sprites, Fairies, Elves, Goblins, &c. in ſubjection to Proſpero, to aſſemble and bid adieu at his embarkation to their maſter. This ſcene is chiefly lyrical.

After a Comick Scene between Trincalo, Stephano, &c. Proſpero, Miranda, Ferdinand, and Caliban, enter.

Proſpero, it ſeems, had intended to leave Caliban in comfortable poſſeſſion of his own cell and moveables, in the Iſland; but, that plan not according with the latter's feelings, this dialogue enſues.

CALIBAN.

CALIBAN.

No, 'pr'ythee, Proſper, do not leave me here
'Mongſt fiends and ſpirits; who, when thou'rt not by
To ſhield him, will lone Caliban devour!

PROSPERO.

Be ſatisfied;—there's nought to apprehend.
In Neptune's bed my magick volumes ſunk,
And many fathoms earth'd my broken ſtaff,
Upon this iſle no ſpirit will abide
Of good or evil, to delight or fear:—
Puppets and elves ſhall gambol here no more,
In ſportive ringlets, by pale Hecate's gleam;—*
No more ſhall hideous ſpectres ſcare thee home,
Loit'ring and grumbling at thy bidden taſk;—
For, when I leave thee, thou'lt be more alone
Than when, with Ariel pent i' th' cloven pine,
A ſhapeleſs, helpleſs thing, I prowling found thee.

CALIBAN.

Which lonelineſs I now miſlike and dread,
More than thy ſprites and fiends; I felt not, e'er
My noble lord came here, its irkſomeneſs,
But thou haſt taught it me: then leave me not,
I pr'ythee!—take me hence!—I'll lick thy feet,
And ever be obedient to controul.

* If this be the production of a modern, he ought to have known that *Hecate* is a tryſſyllable; Shakſpeare, indeed, uſes it as a dyſſyllable only.

PROSPERO.

PROSPERO.

What ſays Miranda? does my child approve
We take our late-offending vaſſal hence?

CALIBAN.

Speak for me, Miſtreſs! I'll be naught no more.

MIRANDA.

I think, dear Sir! the creature's much reform'd,
Since your forgiveneſs of his laſt offence;
And, by commixture with ſo many men,
He hourly humanizes; pity 'twere
In loneſome wretchedneſs to leave him now,
Perforce a ſavage to become again.

CALIBAN.

Thanks! miſtreſs! thanks!—thou ſmooth-fac'd man,
ſpeak too!

FERDINAND.

'Pleaſe you, Sir, take him hence; I dare engage
He'll do you duteous ſervice in return.

CALIBAN.

Good now, my king, be mov'd!

PROSPERO.

I am content;
But, have a care! look you deſerve this grace!

CALIBAN.

Yea, that will I, in ſooth, my noble lord!
In the new world thou goeſt to will I dig
For hidden ſprings, to ſlake my maſter's thirſt;
Hew thee down fewel; ſcoop thee a trim cell;
And be in all things meet thy vaſſal true!

PROSPERO.

Enough;—endeavour to do well, good deeds
Will follow, and beget thee farther favour.

CALIBAN.

Yet grant one other boon, and I am ſped!
'Stead of this rugged hide, to 'ray me now
In ſome ſleek garment of my bounteous lord;
Or ſtill yon dolts thy ſlave will mooncalf call!

PROSPERO.

'Twere not amiſs;—thou may'ſt;—but tarry not.

CALIBAN.

I thank thy greatneſs!—I'll return anon,
And be thy lowly foot-licker for aye!

Exit.

Upon

Upon Caliban's return, dreſt in an old robe, Gonzalo, who in the interim had entered, and converſed with Proſpero, exclaims—

GONZALO.

I'th'name of all that's ſavage, what comes here?
The thing we ſpake of, ſurely, new-attir'd.
Why, how now, Sirrah? Wherefore this fine change
From a rough ſkin to an embroider'd ſilk?

CALIBAN.

I crav'd this robe, that by yon ſcoffing apes
I might no more be flouted at, and mock'd;—
They call'd me ſervant-monſter, mooncalf, fiſh!
Perchance they'll think I am more manlike now;
It may be, but I am not near ſo warm:
A ſhaggy hide, from the chill breeze to 'fend,
Is far more worth than ſilk, or glitt'ring gold.

The entire company being aſſembled, and information brought that all is ready for their embarking, Proſpero ſays,

Here, then, I bid adieu to ſolitude!—
Farewell the deſert wild, the ſanded beach,
Where oft, from dawn to duſky e'en, I've ſtrain'd
My care-dimm'd opticks to deſcry a ſail;
Farewell my low-roof'd cave, whoſe flinty bed
My humbled body hardineſs hath taught,
But never callous made my feeling mind;
While ſome, whoſe limbs enervate upon down,
Permit their hearts to harden into ſtone.
Farewell adverſity;—O, beſt of ſchools!

Still may I practice what in thee I learn'd.
Farewell my ſorrows all!—hail, ſmiling peace!
And laud we Heav'n for this our bleſt releaſe!

After a caution given to Proſpero by Ariel, for a very particular reaſon aſſigned, not to touch at any land till they had reach'd their place of deſtination, the whole company embark; Spirits of various denominations take leave of Proſpero in a Lyrical Farewell: which concludes the firſt Act.

In ſome excellent papers on *The Tempeſt*, in *The Adventurer*, the writer of them, ſpeaking of the brutal barbarity of the ſon of Sycorax, ſays—"I always lament that our author has not preſerved this fierce and implacable ſpirit in Calyban, to the end of the play; inſtead of which, he has, I think, injudiciouſly put into his mouth, words that imply repentance and underſtanding."

"————————I'll be wiſe hereafter
"And ſeek for grace." &c.

Whether the fine taſte of the elegant writer did but coincide with Shakſpeare's then-unknown amplification of this ſingular character; or whether, if it be an imitation only, the copier availed himſelf of Dr. Hawkſworth's hint, is a queſtion for the connoiſſeurs: certain it is, that the implacable

cable ſpirit of this demi-devil burſts forth, the firſt opportunity it hath of again ſhewing itſelf.

On Caliban's being aſſured, in the firſt Act, that he ſhall accompany his maſter, and ſtill-beloved miſtreſs, he ſays, apart,

Now ſhall I ſee the wond'rous, yearn'd-for, place,
Where many Proſpers and Mirandas dwell:
He calls it Milan:—I opine 'tis Heav'n!
It muſt, perforce; for many ſuch as ſhe
Would make a Heav'n e'en of this deſert iſle!

And when he firſt ſees the ſhip, he exclaims,

O, Setebos!
What glorious thing is yon', as mountain huge!
Doth firmly reſt upon th'unſtable ſea?
Fanning, with flickering top, the welkin's cheek!
'Tis ſure ſome god, is come to bear us hence,
To Milan; which I rightly judg'd was Heav'n!

Being, in the ſecond Act, on the deck, with Stephano and Trinculo, they converſe as follows;—

STEPHANO.

Now, 'Ban! how do you ſtomach ſailing? is't not rare to ſkim like a gull, thus, 'tween wind and water? how doſt like it, eh?

CALIBAN.

I like it much! This is a brave, fine god!

And

And bears us daintily;—how ſwift he is!
He ſcuds the ocean fleet as fawn the earth!
O, that my dam were living to behold him!
Grim Setebos ſhe would renounce with ſcorn;
Low, proſtrate, fall with me; and thus adore!

[*Kneeling.*

TRINCULO.

What's in the wind, now, 'trow?

CALIBAN.

Thou unmatch'd wonder!—miracle of pow'r!
Hear thy vow'd vaſſal's pray'r, and grant his ſuit!
Give me but vengeance on my tyrant lord,
(Whom, tho' I feign'd repentance, I deteſt!)
And full fruition of his daughter's charms,
Thy bond-ſlave worſhipper I'll be for aye!

[*Riſing.*

TRINCULO.

Lo! the apoſtate has got him a new idol, Stephano; you may return to your dog and buſh again; he'll worſhip you no more.

CALIBAN.

What means this giddineſs?—I cannot ſtand!

TRINCALO.

And mark, if the mooncalf be not drunk too!

STEPHANO.

Out, you ninny!—'tis only the ſhip's motion makes him ſtagger ſo; as it did me erewhile.

TRINCULO.

TRINCALO.

By'r lady, and ſo it may;—but a ſherris-ſack was mix'd with the ſhip's motion when you caught the ſtaggers.

CALIBAN.

Sure I'm become what they call drunk again!
But know not how;—for, ſave meer element,
Nought have I ſwallow'd ſince I left the iſle.

TRINCALO.

See how he reels!

CALIBAN.

I pr'ythee ſhew where I may lie and ſleep,
That Proſper ſee me not: elſe he will chide!

STEPHANO.

Why, ſurely, the ſhallow-brain'd ideot thinks himſelf drunk indeed!

TRINCALO.

A rare conceit!—we'll humour it;—and, while he is napping, if we can find the old necromancer in the mood, try to get off keeping watch here at night.

STEPHANO.

Agreed.—Come along, you drunken owl! and we'll lead you where you may rooſt in ſafety, till you are ſober.

CALIBAN.

But am I drunk in ſooth?—I pr'ythee ſay!

TRINCALO,

TRINCALO.

Drunk, quotha? there's the queſtion!—ay, reeling-ripe, as when the piping fairy led us by the ears into the pool; then, indeed, it was with ſack: now with only the ſhip's motion:—but, a ſmall matter will turn a weak head!

CALIBAN.

Give me ſack now! for I can but be drunk!
'Twill drown my fear, and make me full of mirth;
I may as well be jocund-drunk, as ſad:—
Give me ſome ſack, I pr'ythee, ere I ſleep!

STEPHANO.

Here's a flaggon for you, fiſh!—the king in the cabin can't ~~drink~~ drink better.

CALIBAN.

'Tis paſſing good! a king 'twill make of me!
This ſhall be pillow be;—I'll drink and ſleep;
Nor dread ſour Proſper, while of this I've ſtore.

Trincalo and Stephano having in their application to Proſpero told him that Caliban was drunk and aſleep, are orderd to fetch him; they arouſe, and bring him into the cabin.

CALIBAN.

Whither doſt lead me?—what, doth Proſper ſleep?
And ſhall we brain the hated tyrant now!

PROSPERO.

Approach, thou earth! thou drunken, murd'rous ſlave!

CALIBAN.

CALIBAN.

Thou ly'ſt! I am no ſlave;—but free as thou!
If I perchance am drunk, 'twas this huge god,
Whoſe man-fed belly we are now within,
Did make me ſo while I did worſhip him.
Muſt I be ever thus for nothing chid!

Proſpero, to puniſh his relapſe, enjoins him to remain on the deck, with the others who had offended him, all night.

They endeavour to ſooth, and reconcile Caliban to what they have brought on him, by ſome common-place jeſts; but the monſter, not being now in a joking humour, ſays—

Peace, ye dull fools! I will no more endure
This ſcurvy jeſting;—ye are baſe and falſe!
Ye firſt, like fiends, ſeduce, and then betray!
Beware, foul traitors, how henceforth ye mock;
Leſt into both I ſtrike my ſharpen'd fangs,
And 'gainſt each other daſh ye, mongrels, dead!

They pacify him at length, by promiſing to deviſe ſome revenge againſt Proſpero; and he exclaims,—

The thought of that would make me brave the night,
Tho' livid light'nings, darting, ſinged my head;
And rifted rocks 'mid yeſty waves o'erdaſh'd!

He is, at length, wrought into good humour; and the ſecond act concludes with their ſinging

the entire catch, of which in *The Tempeſt* we have only this fragment ;———

"Flout 'em, and ſkout 'em ; and ſkout 'em, and flout 'em ;
"Thought is free."

The "*gentle Readerres*" muſt ſuppoſe other ſcenes to have intervened ; but Caliban being ſo unique a character, I was ſolicitous that the extracts I procured ſhould relate chiefly to him : in the third Act he is ſeen dreaming of Miranda, and talking in his ſleep, on the deck ;——

Ho, ho ! 'tis heaven !—now I am bleſt indeed !

Kiſs me again, my ſtar-eyed Paragon !
Thy mouth's more ſweet than luſcious honey-bags.

Come with me, ſwan-ſkin ! and I'll ſhew thee where
Theſe nails have dug for Proſper a deep pit,
Falſe-ſurfac'd quaintly with inviting herbs ;
Within lurk adders, urchins, ſcorpions, toads !
That, if i' th' fall the tyrant be not kill'd,
By venom'd bites and ſtings he'll mad expire !

The Spirit of his Dam, Sycorax, deſcends, amidſt thunder, lightning, &c.

Caliban

Caliban awakes.

O, Setebos, what a rare dream was this!
To kiſs my miſtreſs' honey-dropping lips,
And—Day and Night!—do I yet ſleep or wake?
Wing'd like a bat methinks I ſee my dam!
In dreams I have oft beheld thee, but ne'er thus;
Thou wilt not harm me, Sycorax?—lo, I kneel!

Sycorax, who at her death was "*doom'd for a certain term to faſt in fires,*" replies——

Fear not, my ſon! this very hour
Was Sycorax freed; a Spirit of pow'r!
On earth to rule almoſt divine!
This watry element's not mine.
Then, if thou hat'ſt thy tyrant lord,
Unto thy mother's heſt accord.
To drive him ſwift into my toil,
By force, or by ſome ſubtle guile,
The pilot cauſe ſteer ſtrait for land;
There nothing can my power withſtand!
A ſorcereſs, at my bidding, there
E'en now his torments doth prepare:
And, to protect thee from annoy,
Invulnerable be, my joy!

Sebaſtian and Anthonio, having returned to their villainy, abet the monſter; whoſe firſt ſtep to diſtreſs Proſpero is the deſtroying, or throwing over-board, all the proviſions; excepting what is neceſſary for himſelf and his party.

Proſpero and the reſt, being informed of theſe diſaſters, repair to the deck; Caliban thus exults over his maſter:——

Ho, ho, ho, ho! I now ſhall be reveng'd
For all my pinches, ſtitches, racking cramps!
My unthank'd ſervices, and toilſome taſks!
Bearing huge logs of wood, for needful fire
To dreſs the meat I firſt had hunted down;
From the quick freſhes fetching wholſome drink;
For luſcious ſhell-fiſh, or choice callow birds,
Climbing ſteep craggy cliffs, and brittle boughs;
From which when I have fall'n, and gotten hurt,
To heal my wounds thou, tyrant, gave'ſt me blows!

During the altercation, Ferdinand ſays;—

——————let us, my friends,
Aſſail the triple knot; and, when ſubdu'd,
Teach them the way to faſt, as they would us.

CALIBAN.

Try firſt to maſter me, weak, ſtripling boy!
I guard the food, eke moſt delicious wine;
O'ercover'd with this now-deſpiſed robe!
And, 'leſs on land ye go in ſearch of more,
Ye, famiſhing, ſhall ſee us glut and gorge,
Whilſt, ravenous grown, each other ye devour!

PROSPERO.

Foul hag-ſeed, hence! down to the hold, begone!

CALIBAN.

Begone thyſelf, proud tyrant! I'll not budge.
My cruel maſter thou haſt been too long!

I now

I now am thine!—and, if thou diſobey'ſt,
The ſtripes and pinches thou inflict'd'ſt on me,
On thy curſt fleſh will I, tenfold, repay!

PROSPERO.

How now, bold ſlave! this language to thy lord?
Who, with a word, can ſtrike thee, inſtant', dead!

CALIBAN.

Thou ly'ſt! thou canſt not—vain, forgetful fool!
Thy ſpells, thy charms, yea all thy pow'r is gone;
Which did controul the great and leſſer light,
Subjected Spirits, and made me thy ſlave!
In that ſame ſea thy potent magick ſtorm'd,
Like a dull thing thou drowned'ſt all thine art!
Now Caliban, more ſtrong, is Proſper's lord;
And thou muſt him obey, as he did thee.

The good old lord, Gonzalo, during the conteſt ſays,——

Of forty devils were the pow'r combin'd,
Thus would I ſtrive to quell this hell-born beaſt!

CALIBAN.*

Ho, ho, ho, ho! thy ſword is blunt, old man!
Now could I grind thy pithleſs bones to duſt;
Rend ye to ſhreds, or tread ye into earth!

But,

* Could any thing really perſuade me that an original and hitherto-unpubliſhed play, written by Shakſpeare, were in being, two paſſages in this ſpeech would; which are ſo ſimilar to two others in *Macbeth* and *As you like it*, that it is not probable any imitator would have ventured on ſuch cloſe parallels.

But, get ye gone!—ye may as ſoon wound air,
Water, or fire, as charmed Caliban!
The ſpirit of my dam is ſtrong in me!
Hath callous made me to weak mortals' blows;
And your united force I ſtand, and dare!
Ho, ho, ho, ho! what, are ye all afeard?

GONZALO.

By'r Lakin! I yet never was before;
But my old blood's now curdled in my veins:

PROSPERO.

Put up your ſwords, good ſirs, they're but as ſtraws;
A charmed life, in aid of ſtrength, now given,
This beaſt hath pow'r to bring us all to nought!
My life alone fell Sycorax doth ſeek;—
And that, to ſave you, will I gladly yield!
Thou more-than-devil! ſpeak thy dam's beheſt;
Which, though deſtruction follow, I obey!

CALIBAN.

Make ſtraight to land, dread Sycorax commands!
What there ſhall hap I know not;—but, I have hope
All but thy daughter will my dam deſtroy!
My fruſtrate-purpoſe then will I effect,
And people th' unknown clime with Calibans!

FERDINAND.

Peace, monſter, peace! that heav'n will ne'er permit.

PROSPERO.

Patience, my ſon! my life alone is ſought;
And what's a life, compared with chaſtity,
Connubial crown! we come and go as faſt,

*As mill-ſail ſhadows courſe each other o'er
The ſunny earth, in an unceaſing round!
Nor can I periſh, but by that decree,
To which who would not chearfully reſign!
For land, ho! pilot; fearleſs I'll aſhore,
To prove the utmoſt malice of the fiend!
Lament not, ſhould I fall;—they are not ills,
Tho' they appear ſuch, righteous heaven wills!

The Scene cloſes, and the third act concludes with a convocation of Ariel, and other good Spirits; who having determined to counteract, if poſſible, the machinations of Sycorax, &c. ſing a hymn and chorus, expreſſive of their ardour in the cauſe of Virtue.

The fourth act brings us acquainted with Abdallah, (in *The Tempeſt* the nameleſs) King of Tunis, lately married to Claribel, daughter of Alonſo, king of Naples.

In an old geographical book in my poſſeſſion, date unknown, is the following paſſage;—

"This

* As mill-ſail ſhadows &c.

This paſſage ſtruck me, at firſt, as too mean and familiar for the mouth of Proſpero; till I recollected an almoſt-ſimilar one in the firſt act of *The Tempeſt*;

" ——————————where thou didſt vent thy groans,
" As faſt as mill-wheels ſtrike."

" This whole Countrie (at this day) is called the kingdom of *Tunis:* the king whereof is a kinde of ſtipendary unto the *Turke*: the people that inhabite there are generally *Sarazens*, and doe profeſſe *Mahomet*."

It has always appeared very ſtrange to me, yet I have never met with any obſervation on it, that Shakſpeare ſhould ſo groſsly have erred againſt the known laws and cuſtoms of nations, as to couple the daughter of a Chriſtian king with a Mahometan!

For a royal Proteſtant to marry a Papiſt, or vice verſa, required a diſpenſation from the Pope; but, to permit the union of a Chriſtian princeſs and an infidel was, I believe, only in the power of a Poet; who could plead in extenuation, that " *the trueſt poetry is the moſt feigning.*" We ſhall find, however, by this *Sequel*, that Shakſpeare, if it be his, was not inſenſible of the faux pas he had committed; as the marriage is ſo very infelicitous, that the Bride, poor thing! remains a *Virgin:* whence the title of this choſen Play or Interlude, THE VIRGIN QUEEN.

" 'Fore the beginning of this play," a Sorcereſs, (formerly leagued with Sycorax, who was baniſhed from Argier, or Algiers, to Proſpero's iſle)

iſle) was enamoured of Abdallah; he rejecting her offers of love, and marrying Claribel, the enraged witch prevents conſummation; conveys the unhappy pair by her "*ſo potent art*" from Tunis, and holds them in durance: but, for that even Magick cannot quite ſeparate a loving married pair, they are permitted to ſee and converſe with each other daily.

In this poſture of affairs the fourth Act opens; diſcovering Abdallah alone, reclining in a ſumptuous pavilion.

ABDALLAH.

Nights vapours are diſpers'd; and the clear morn
Bluſhes like baſhful bride from couch upris'n;
Whoſe yellow treſſes, all diſhevell'd, throw
A golden glare around, creating day!
But what is day after drear nights like mine?
From my ſweet bride eſtrang'd, my Claribel!
Yet, wherefore do I thus indulge deſpair?
Still may I hope to be deliver'd hence;
Still hope I ſhall regain my throne and crown;
From which, as in a dream, my queen and ſelf
By Hyrca's ſorcery were hither brought,
Me for her paramour; deteſted hag!
And my fair bride her low-degraded ſlave!
But, ſoft! I hear the haſteful ſtep of love!
'Tis Claribel! fly ſorrow from my breaſt!
For where ſhe comes nought can abide but joy!

Enter Claribel.

CLARIBEL.

My dear Abdallah! mine and Tunis' lord!
Fain would I greet thee with a happy day;
But the fell Sorcereſs, Hyrca, wild with ire,
That her foul paſſion ſtill you treat with ſcorn,
Since midnight hath been working ſpells, and charms,
The prelude of reſolv'd deſtruction nigh!

ABDALLAH.

Were't but myſelf her wicked pow'r could reach,
I'd meet her utmoſt fury with a ſmile;
Yielding my firm and unpolluted fleſh
By fiery pincers to be burnt and torn!

CLARIBEL.

And thinks my love that only him would harm?
Thou know'ſt whate'er of ill ſhould thee betide,
Muſt wound the ſoul of doating Claribel!
But, for ſome hope to mitigate this fear,
As on the ocean's marge e'en now I gazed,
I ſaw a gallant veſſel furl her ſails;
Whilſt from her boat ſtept divers on the ſhore:
And ſee, dear lord, already they approach.

Enter Proſpero and Miranda.

MIRANDA.

'Beſeech you, Sir! venture no farther on!

PROSPERO.

Fear nothing, dear!—lo, yonder are a pair,
Of human form, and moſt majeſtic port;
I will accoſt them.

MIRANDA.

MIRANDA.

Rather, Sir, avoid them!
They're ſpirits! and, tho' one ſeems fair and good,
That, with ſo dark an hue, is ſure a fiend!

PROSPERO.

Collect thyſelf, my child!—'tis but the tinct
Peculiar to the race in Africk born,
Upon which coaſt we now in ſafety tread;
E'en ſuch a one, yet courteous as ourſelves,
Did Ferd'nand's ſiſter, Claribel, late wed:
Should this man prove like what Fame blazons him,
And from fell Sycorax' malice Heav'n doth ſhield,
We cannot doubt of ſuccour in our need.

CLARIBEL.

Heard you, Abdallah, what this ſtranger ſaid?

ABDALLAH.

I did; and am abſorb'd in wonder, ſweet!
'Pleaſe you, approach, grave Sir! and you, fair maid!
Nor lack for aught, ſave what we alſo want.

Enter Ferdinand, his ſword drawn; and, ſoon after, Alonzo, Gonzalo, Adrian, and Franciſco.

FERDINAND.

The beaſt no longer ſeems invulnerable,
But ſhuns my ſword; and, with his foul compeers,
Growling, a different track from us purſues.

PROSPERO.

To ſhare my fortunes ſince ye all perſiſt,
As yet, 'thank Heav'n! we are not only ſafe,
But landed on a ſeeming plenteous ſpot;
Where are inhabitants, of manners mild
As their ſoft climate's ſweet ſurrounding air.

ALONSO.

The Mooriſh king, Abdallah, and my child!
'Tis ſure enchanted ground!—Are we in Tunis,
A deluſive dream,—or, is it witchcraft all?

GONZALO.

Witchcraft, I doubt! and theſe but devils, Sir,
Hid in your children's ſhapes.

ALONSO.

Art thou my child,
An inſubſtantial ſhade, or wicked fiend?

FERDINAND, *embracing Claribel.*

Shade is it none, but Claribel herſelf;—
No fiend had ever pow'r to look ſo fair!

CLARIBEL, *kneeling to Alonſo.*

Aſtoniſhment hath held me dumb till now!—
'Tis your own Claribel, your wretched child!

ALONSO.

Ha! wherefore wretched? Speak, ungrateful king!
Did I deprive our Europe of thoſe charms,
To have my child in Tunis wretched made?

CLARIBEL.

CLARIBEL.

Oh, no! alack, Sir, we are far from thence!

ABDALLAH.

Great king of Naples! my moſt honour'd ſire!
Whom to behold again, was paſt my hope;—
Fly with your goodly company this place,
And reſcue hence your Claribel and ſon!
But, if that may not be, ſecure yourſelves.

ALONSO.

What means my ſon! know you of ill awaits?

ABDALLAH.

Here 'bides a potent Sorcereſs; by whoſe art
From Tunis we were hither ſtrangely brought,
Soon as your royal fleet had homeward ſail'd;
Myſelf the object of her foul deſire,
My virgin-bride degraded to a ſlave!
Her the vile witch would elſewhere fain have ſtay'd,
But had not pow'r; and, though till now debarr'd
Chaſte Hymen's rites, on each returning morn
Like th'eaſtern ſun ſhe glads my longing eye!
For witchcraft cannot quite divide the pair,
Whoſe hearts by love and wedlock are entwin'd!

PROSPERO.

Myſterious Heav'n ſure pointed out this path
To free from hence theſe twain! my mind's at reſt!
Let us, my friends, ſtrait victual home our ſhip;
And, nought impeding, quickly re-embark.—
Come, I'll inſtruct you, Sirs, how to enſnare

The

The ſkipping kid, and dappled, bounding fawn;
Whilſt younger Ferdinand doth agile climb
The cliffs and trees, for birdlings neſted there.

FERDINAND.

Miranda, ſweet! ſtay thou with Claribel,
Thy Ferdinand's lov'd ſiſter, and now thine;
I muſt accompany our ſires and friends,
Swift as the roe-buck to outſtrip our game!

ABDALLAH.

I'll guide you, Sirs, to where you'll plenteous find
The finn'd or feather'd race; unto the haunts
Of the fleet veniſon, the clamb'ring kid,
And, though to ſlaughter them doth irk my heart!
The lambkin, friſking near his fleecy dam:
Or, if a nobler game you would purſue,
The boar, fierce buffalo, and angry bear.*

PROSPERO.

Lead on, great Sir! 'twill be a royal chaſe,
Wherein a king doth rouſe for us our game!
Stay with this fair one, chuck! nor fear miſchance.
This wond'rous meeting Heav'n, I'm ſure, deſign'd
The foretaſte of ſtill greater bliſs in ſtore!

[*Exeunt all but Claribel and Miranda.*

CLARIBEL.

Stranger! with whom my Ferdinand ſeems charm'd,
Say, whence and who thou art?—a queen?—his bride?
Whom, ſince my nuptials, he hath woo'd and wed?

MIRANDA.

* I fear that Shakſpeare, or his imitator, has, in this enumeration of creatures, mentioned ſome not indigenous to the northern coaſt of Africa; where the ſcene is now ſuppoſed to lie.

MIRANDA.

Anſwer me firſt.—Why did you kiſs my love?
I much admir'd, till then, your angel-face!
Are you an angel, or of woman-kind?
For nought to judge by ſaw I e'er before;
Except the mocking ſhadow of myſelf,
And Ariel, my grave fire's angelick ſprite;
You moſt reſemble me, tho' fairer far!

CLARIBEL.

Thy ſpeech is paſſing ſtrange! but, if't be ſooth,
Thy innocence deceives thee overmuch.
No more can I, a woman as thou art,
Compare with thee, fairer than beauty's queen,
Than can with Ferdinand the Moor, my lord;
Whom, ne'ertheleſs, paſt health or life I love!

MIRANDA.

What, that dark creature!—'tis not poſſible;—
As ſoon the ſwan may on the raven dote!

CLARIBEL.

I thought like thee when firſt the Moor I ſaw,
And almoſt loath'd where duty bade me love;
But my Abdallah has a ſnow-white ſoul,
Which o'er his hue a bleaching luſtre throws! *
'Thas won that heart Alonſo could not give,
And chang'd my meer obedience into choice.
Then be not jealous, faireſt! thou'ſt no cauſe;
Much as a ſiſter ſhould I Ferd'nand love,
But truly, no jot more.

* This reminds us of Deſdemona's expreſſion;—
"I ſaw Othello's viſage in his mind."

MIRANDA.

MIRANDA.

Jealous! what's that?
Is it a Naples, or a Tunis word?
I know not what it means;—but am content!
So kind you look, and fair you ſpeak, I'm ſure
You cannot mean to do me any wrong.

CLARIBEL.

Come, then, ſweet-heart! and, in the adjacent bow'r,
Repoſe thee 'till our lords and ſires return;
Taſte of the pine, or more nutritious fig;
Whilſt the pomegranate and ſharp citron's juice,
Temp'ring each other, form thy mingled draught.

MIRANDA.

Shew me, I pray, to the clear, running ſtream;
With, if you have't, a little new-drawn milk;
Some berries, cracknels, or ripe ears of corn;
And, our Creator thanking firſt, then thee
For thy much goodneſs to a ſtranger-maid;
I'll break my faſt, nor covet daintier fare!

Caliban, with the two villains, Anthonio and Sebaſtian, having remained perdue, enter, and ſuddenly ſeize the unguarded females; a conteſt enſues between the three brutes on their account: Anthonio claiming to have Claribel, and Sebaſtian attaching himſelf to Miranda.

CALIBAN.

But whom ſhall I have, if you each take one?
My miſtreſs have I ever hunger'd for!

Sty'd

Sty'd in a rock with her, on acorns fed,
Sea-brine, or ſtagnant, mantled-pool, to drink,
On her alone I, gluttoning, could have gorg'd,
And nothing lack'd, having my nonpareil!

[*Attempting to claſp Miranda.*

MIRANDA.

Save me, Anthonio! ſave your helpleſs niece!

ANTHONIO.

My charge is here;—Sebaſtian you will ſhield.

SEBASTIAN.

Forego your hold!—Miranda muſt be mine!
The other female, if Anthonio liſt,
Thou'rt free to take; but this I'll guard with life!

CALIBAN.

'Tis well there is another to appeaſe;
Elſe her I'd have, or will or nill ye, lord!
This is as red and white, and finer far!
Wilt thou be mine, my jay, my parroquet?
Thou'rt wond'rous gaudy; I ſhall love thee much!*

ANTHONIO.

Stand off, ſir brute! this is my lovely prize;—
Miranda you declar'd was your deſire;—
Her muſt you have, or none!

* This filthy monſter having, in *The Tempeſt*, ſuggeſted to Stephano that he might poſſeſs Miranda; it is not to be wondered at, that he is here content to exchange her for Claribel.

CALIBAN.

Oh, oh, oh, oh! [*Roaring tremendouſly with anger.*

CLARIBEL.

Heav'n, what a conteſt!

MIRANDA.

No way to eſcape?

CALIBAN.

What, am I both denied?—then, both I'll have!
Your holds forego, and quit them ſtrait to me,
Or, by my dam's god, Setebos, I ſwear,
I'll flay ye, quick! then tear you joint from joint!*

(Caliban ſeizing the men, the females get free.)

CLARIBEL.

Fly, fly! Abdallah!

MIRANDA.

Ferd'nand! father! friends!

[*Exeunt, ſeverally.*

CALIBAN.

Let looſe, ye barnacles! they both are flown!

* I'll flay ye quick! &c.—*Quick* may here ſignify either *alive* or *immediately*; the former I conceive to have been the Author's idea, as it gives the more ſpirited and ſavage meaning. *I'll flay you alive*, is a common expreſſion from vulgar parents and nurſes to froward children.

ANTHONIO.

ANTHONIO.

We hold thee not !—'tis thou detaineſt us !
Darting your talons through our robes and ſkins,
Which you can ſcarce withdraw !

SEBASTIAN.

I'm ſtruck to th'bone !

CALIBAN.

Thus, then, I wrench them forth !

ANTHONIO and SEBASTIAN.

Oh !———

CALIBAN.

Howl ye ? dogs !
If I could tarry I would give ye cauſe ;
And into atoms rend your quivering hearts !
[*Exeunt, ſeverally.*

Comick matter now, as throughout the play, takes place ; which relieves the weight and terror of the ſerious ſcenes.

The fifth Act commences with the Monſter, in purſuit of the females.

CALIBAN.

I can find neither ! and could tear myſelf
For letting them, ſo dolt-like, both eſcape !
Had I kept either of them 't had ſuffic'd ;

Though my own miſtreſs leiſer I'd enjoy !*
Nor can I ſpy my dam ! I hop'd t'have ſeen
The wond'rous ſpirit, when we reach'd the land,
Deſtroy that tyrant Proſper ! or, while-ere,
I had done't upon the ſea ! but, what comes here ?
Methinks I hear a footfall in yon dell ;
Perchance it is my miſtreſs ;—that it may !
I will enbuſh me ! then, ſhould ſhe approach,
Like cat-a-mountain ſpringing, ſeize my prey !

MIRANDA, *entering.*

Whither, ah whither ſhall I bend my ſteps,
To ſeek my ſtraying father and dear lord ?
Or hide me from——Protect me, heav'n ! I'm caught !

CALIBAN.

'Scape if thou can'ſt again ! now thou art mine,
'Spite of thoſe chattering and deceitful apes ;
Who would have talk'd me out of thee, my right !
Or that much finer, but leſs beauteous, ſhe.

MIRANDA.

Be gentle, Caliban !—gripe not ſo hard !
Leſt with your talons my frail ſkin you tear !

CALIBAN.

I cannot harm thee !—tho' I meant thee ſcathe,
In puniſhment for thy late ſcornful flouts !
Be thou but kind, I will be ſo to thee !

MIRANDA.

* This erotick uſe of the verb *enjoy*, I thought not Shakſpearean, till I recollected the following paſſage in *King Lear* :——

" ——————neither can be enjoy'd,
" If both remain alive."

Yet, can it be imagined that Caliban could have learnt it, with this peculiar and indelicate ſenſe, from his only teachers, Proſpero and Miranda ? I fear the author, whether ancient or modern, in this inſtance forgot himſelf.

MIRANDA.

Alack, alack! when was I otherwiſe?

CALIBAN.

Full oft to me! although I ever lov'd,
And fondled thee!—When firſt into my iſle
Proſper, a puling babe, Miranda brought;
Weeping through hunger, ſhiv'ring with bleak winds;
I lick'd the tears from thy frore, blubber'd cheeks,
Nouſled and chafed thee in my hairy arms,
Hugging thee cloſe as marmoſets their young;
Fed thee with eggs;—into thy pretty mouth
From the goat's dug preſs'd the warm, foſt'ring milk;
Of thiſtle-down and goſs'mer made thy bed;
Then huſh'd and lullaby'd thee to thy ſleep,
And lack'd my own, that thine might be ſecure.

MIRANDA.

I ever ſtrove to thank thee for't; and ſtill,
As from my father ſpeech and ſenſe I learn'd,
Delighted in imparting both to thee!
I never laid upon thee harſh command;
Aſſiſted always to trim up our cell;
And, in each look, word, deed, was ever kind!

CALIBAN.

But kinder far to Ferdinand! though he
Ne'er nurs'd, nor ſtroak'd, nor fed, nor fondled thee!
In our lime-grove I lurk'd behind a buſh,
And ſaw the lack-beard kiſs that down-like hand;
I could have claw'd his lips off, had I dar'd!
But now, from Proſper's magick-pow'r I'm free;
Him and my hated rival laugh to ſcorn;
Here have thee, and will make thee ſtrait my own!

MIRANDA.

MIRANDA.

O, Ferdinand! my love! where haſt thou ſtray'd?
Haſte, and deliver me from this vile thrall!

CALIBAN.

'Twere death, ſhould Ferd'nand interrupt me now!
Though I ſeem'd fearful late, and ſhunn'd his ſword,
'Twas but in craft, to compaſs what hath happ'd;
Then ſtint this din, aud let thine eyes ſoft beam;
Nor ſcorn, nor flout, for I'm not ſmooth as he!
In beauty what I lack I have in ſtrength;
More needful, to protect and get thee food!
I'll fetch thee, miſtreſs! ſweet birds from the grove;
Gather th'empurpled grape for thy repaſt;
And weave a flow'ry garland, thee to crown
Queen of this unknown clime and me, for aye!
Give me the honey of thy lips in lieu,
And let me clip thee!

MIRANDA.

Monſter! ſtand aloof!
I feel ſtrange courage, and unuſual ſtrength;
Nor longer fear thee or thy brutal force!
A heavenly inſpiration doth aſſure
No ill ſhall 'gainſt a ſpotleſs maid prevail!
The Lybian lion at my feet would crouch,
Tho' hunger-driv'n, if what I've read be true;
Nor murkieſt fiends, nor thou, more dreadful yet,
Can foil or harm troth-plighted, clear virginity!

The laſt ſpeech from Caliban reminds one of the witch's ſon and Florimell, in *The Faerie Queene** of

* *The Faerie Queene.*—This is the true orthography of Shakſpeare's time. See the earlieſt editions of that delightful Poem, 4to. 1590, and 1596; in the ſecond ſtanza of which we read, not *Virginn*, but *Virgin*.

" Helpe

of Spenſer; whom we know Shakſpeare admired, and from whom it is evidently copied: Miranda's reply, if it be not Shakſpeare's writing, was probably founded on a ſublime paſſage in Milton's *Maſk at Ludlow Caſtle*.

And here muſt I conclude theſe extracts; being

" ———————— *forbid*
" *To tell the ſecrets of* the *priſon-houſe*,"

wherein the ſorcereſs Hyrca, and the ſpirit of Sycorax, aſſemble the unhappy voyagers, &c. no,

" *this* infernal *blazon muſt not be!*"

Whether or not the entire play of *The Virgin Queen* will ever be made publick, I do not know; nor, if it be not Shakſpeare's, will, I ſuppoſe, any body care!

F. G. WALDRON.

January 28, 1796.

" Helpe then, O holy *virgin* chiefe of nyne." 1590.
" Helpe then, ô holy *Virgin* chiefe of nine." 1596.

In the " *Deed of Truſt to John Hemynge*," we read *The Virginn Quene*; it might as well have been, in the true cockney ſtyle, *The Wurginn Quean*.

The premature uſe of the word *Viewe*, in the ſenſe aſſigned to it in " Viewe o my Maſterre Irelands houſe," will, I believe, ſhortly be diſcuſſed, with other congenial topicks, by a much abler pen than mine: when, if I miſtake not, it will be inconteſtibly proved, that the orthography of even the name SHAKSPEARE, in the pretended autographs of the Poet himſelf, in Mr. Ireland's volume, is *abſolutely* and *undeniably* WRONG!

ERRATA.

By a casual omission in page 10, an expression in the paragraph relating to the hand-writing and signature of the Earl of Southampton's letter, erroneously applies to Shakspeare's letter to the Earl. The reader is requested, therefore, to insert the few words printed below in Italicks, that the passage may stand thus;—

The scrawl of *the Earl's answer to* this sublime and blooming letter, &c.

In p. 32, line 1, for, there's *the* question, read, there's *a* question.

Idem, line 20, for *orderd*, read *ordered*.

In p. 40, instead of, *For a royal Protestant*, &c. read, For a royal Papist to marry a Protestant, as in the case of Henrietta Maria of France, and our king Charles the first, required a dispensation, &c.

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A

COMPARATIVE REVIEW

OF THE

OPINIONS

OF

MR. JAMES BOADEN,

(Editor of the Oracle)

In February, March, and April, 1795;

AND OF

JAMES BOADEN, ESQ.

(Author of Fontainville Foreſt, and of a Letter to George Steevens, Eſq.)

In February, 1796,

RELATIVE TO

THE SHAKSPEARE MSS.

BY A FRIEND TO CONSISTENCY.

——NIL FUIT UNQUAM
SIC IMPAR SIBI——
HOR.

London:

PRINTED FOR G. SAEL, NO. 192, STRAND; AND SOLD BY MESS. WHITES, FLEET STREET; EGERTON, WHITEHALL; AND FAULDER, BOND STREET.

[Price 2s.]

A

COMPARATIVE REVIEW,

&c.

IT is not becauſe the ſtyle or the matter of Mr. Boaden's Critical Examination of the Shakſpeare MSS. appears to poſſeſs any intrinſic merit, that it is made the ſubject of conſideration in the following pages. Much leſs is this ſlight attempt dictated by any apprehenſion that the authenticity of thoſe MSS. will be materially affected, either by the arguments of ſuch an examiner, or the detection of his ſophiſtry. But when an individual pretends to direct the taſte of the public, when, relying on the fancied ingenuity and importance of his criticiſm, he attempts to depreciate real merit, it becomes, at leaſt, neceſſary to examine the purity of his motives, and the conſiſtency of his conduct.

The authenticity of the MSS. in the hands of Mr. Ireland, muſt ultimately be referred to a higher tribunal, and undergo a trial, from

 which

which the Author of this Eſſay doubts not they will derive additional luſtre, and more permanent credit. They muſt ultimately ſtand or fall, according as they ſhall anſwer the ſevereſt teſt of critical inveſtigation; but that deciſion muſt, for the preſent, be delayed, becauſe the hoſt of *erudite* commentators *will not ſee them*, leſt they ſhould be convinced.

In the mean while, a champion has ſtepped forth, of too little conſequence, either from ability or *reputation*,* to give *ſerious* alarm to thoſe who feel intereſted in that ſucceſs of the MSS. which truth ſeems to demand.—To prevent, however, any bias which the public mind may receive from the exertions of an *unanſwered* opponent, however contemptible, his condemnation is here drawn from his own mouth; and it is preſumed, that ſuch a proof of inconſiſtency and impotence will ſhew him to be totally unworthy of attention, and will enable Mr. Ireland to go forward undiſturbed in eſtabliſhing the authenticity of his valuable MSS. by the ſure teſtimony of intrinſic excellence and indubitable fact.

Mr. Boaden, in a letter recently addreſſed to Mr. Steevens, relative to the MSS. in the

* The writer means only to ſpeak of Mr. Boaden's *literary* reputation.

hands

hands of Mr. Ireland, lays claim to the character of ſincerity, from the apparently frank and open avowal of the favourable impreſſion which thoſe MSS. at firſt made upon him, together with the very different opinions which he now entertains. Such a ſtatement, on the firſt view, appears like the dictate of candour; but in order to ſubſtantiate it, the cauſes of this total change of ſentiment ſhould be accurately detailed, and ſhould be proved to be adequate to the effects which they are ſaid to have produced. If this ſhall not appear to be the caſe in Mr. Boaden's inſtance, if his arguments, (or rather attempts at argument) ſhall be found totally nugatory, and if the reaſons for commendation ſhall remain in full force, or even acquire additional ſtrength, *whilſt* the *critic* avows a determined hoſtility; what kind of opinion can we form of his abilities or integrity? Muſt we not ſuppoſe that ſome perſonal pique or petty reſentment lurks in his mind, or that ſome ſtrange caprice has perverted his intellect? In ſhort, muſt we not conclude that the man who thus ſteps forward as a *public cenſor*, is himſelf liable to the imputation either of ignorance or malevolence?

It is a circumſtance very favourable to the MSS. that the *ſight* of them has ſeldom failed to

produce at *leaſt a conviction* of their authenticity. In Mr. Boaden it did more, it produced an "enthuſiaſm"—"a tremor of the pureſt de-"light:" and for days, and weeks, and months after he had ſeen them, he retained ſuch a perſuaſion of their excellence, as (in the language of his own paragraph) "made all ſcepticiſm "ridiculous." But all this, it now ſeems, was error! an error, however, which is *excuſed* by the conſideration, that "credulity is no diſ-"grace," and "that ſtrong enthuſiaſm is "eager to believe." *

Let us pauſe for a moment, to conſider what theſe inſtances are, in which credulity is thus pardonable; and of what nature is the belief ſo induced by enthuſiaſm.—Aſſuredly Mr. Boaden will not aſſert that credulity would be pardonable in the caſe of an impoſture, bearing on its *very ſurface* the ſtamp of falſhood—or, that an *enthuſiaſm ſtrong enough* to enforce ſuch a belief, would be engendered by *trifling* ability, or *ſuperficial* excellence.—A little conſideration will ſhew us, that where circumſtances occur flattering to long-contracted habits, and to firmly-rooted judgment, there, and there only, enthuſiaſm is likely to be

* See a letter to Geo. Steevens, Eſq. p. 1 and 2.

ſtrong; there, and there only, belief will probably be eager. Such enthuſiaſm and ſuch belief can only be overſet by ſtronger appeals to the ſame paſſion, or to the ſame judgment.

Mr. Boaden is very liberal in acknowledging in his pamphlet, (what indeed he could not deny, becauſe it would have remained recorded againſt him in his news-paper,) that he was at firſt ſtrongly affected in favour of the MSS.; neither does he deny that he admired their ſtyle, diction, and poetical ſpirit; but he leaves us to diſcover by what new light, by what cogency of argument, that which was *once* diſtinguiſhed for "the utmoſt delicacy of "paſſion, and poetical ſpirit," became *afterwards* "worthy of no other notice, than that "of being metrically ſmooth;"—that which was "rationally pious, and grandly expreſſed," became "execrable jargon," the "puerile "quaintneſs, and idiomatic poverty of a me-"thodiſt rhapſody." In order, therefore, to account for ſo ſingular a phænomenon of mental verſatility, and to teach Mr. Boaden (ſhould he really be ignorant,) the nature of his intellectual progreſs, I ſhall take the liberty of ſtating a few plain and ſimple facts.

I begin by premiſing, that Mr. Boaden is the declared Editor of the Oracle, a daily paper, to which he naturally wiſhes to attach as much conſequence as poſſible. With this laudable deſign in view, as it ſhould ſeem, (for we find his paper, from that period, conſtantly *enriched* with his remarks on the Shakſpeare MSS.) he paid a viſit to Mr. Ireland, on the 14th of February, 1795, to inſpect what he called "the "*invaluable remains* of our immortal bard."—What, and how liberal his reception was, the public was informed by the following paragraph, which appeared in the Oracle, Feb. 16, 1795.

"Shakſpeare MSS.—By the obliging politeneſs of Mr. Ireland, of Norfolk-ſtreet, the "*conductor of this paper* * is enabled to gratify, "in a general way, the public curioſity. To "particulariſe would be *fraudulent and ungrateful*. Beſides the Lear and Vortigern, "there are various papers, the *domeſtica facta* "of this great man's life, diſcovered.

"A letter to the lady he afterwards married, "*diſtinguiſhed for the utmoſt delicacy of paſſion*,

* For attributing to Mr. Boaden the paragraphs which appeared in the Oracle relative to the Shakſpeare MSS. I have one ſimple reaſon, viz. that he was *the only perſon concerned in the direction of that paper that ever viewed them.*

"*and*

" *and poetical ſpirit.* It incloſes a lock of his " hair, alſo preſerved.

" A profeſſion of his religious faith, *ratio-* " *nally pious, and grandly expreſſed.*

" Some poetical compliments, and poetical " exerciſes of fancy, amongſt the company at " whoſe head he is numbered. Deviſes of " land; receipts for money advanced, &c. and " a diſcovery relative to Lord Southampton, " *which we forbear to anticipate,* reflecting im- " mortal honour upon the bounty of the one, " and the modeſty of the other. It is the in- " tention of Mr. Ireland to publiſh the firſt " volume, with fac-ſimiles, if poſſible, by the " King's birth-day; the ſecond volume proba- " bly within the following year: and now, to " this new information, we have only to add, " that *the conviction produced upon our mind, is* " *ſuch as to make all ſcepticiſm ridiculous,* and " when we follow the ſentiments of Dr. Joſeph " Wharton, *we have no fear of our critical or-* " *thodoxy.*"

The ſame paper of the 21ſt contained fur- ther obſervations to this effect: " When we " were favoured with a ſight of theſe invalua- " ble remains, we promiſed the poſſeſſor that " no *ſneering animadverſions, written by thoſe*

" *who*

" *who had never ſeen them*, ſhould paſs without
" reply, and probably reproof. One gentle-
" man makes himſelf merry with a Profeſſion
" of Faith from Shakſpeare; he ſhall be re-
" duced at once to the plea of *Ignoramus*,—
" there *happens to be indiſputable proof* that *this*
" was the cuſtom of the age, nay, that other
" members of the ſame family had done ſo.

" But an objection, has been urged trium-
" phantly by thoſe *who have not ſeen*, that a
" gentleman who had been accuſtomed to the
" hand writing of that period, was yet unable
" to read them.

" The writer of this article is ready to prove
" his acquaintance with the hand writing of
" Elizabeth's reign, in the firſt inſtance, and to
" read once more the MSS. in the ſecond.—As
" to the ſilly ſtuff about the Poet's Courtſhip
" and the Lock of Hair, with recollection of
" ſimilar feelings and ſimilar gifts—

> " We cannot but remember ſuch things were,
> " And were moſt precious to us———"

" The man who cannot, ſhould never truſt
" himſelf with the ſubject of Shakſpeare's life,
" ſhould never by a touch 'pollute the page of
" 'inſpiration.'

" On

On the 26th of February, Mr. Boaden called a ſecond time on Mr. Ireland, again expreſſed his conviction of the authenticity of the MSS. and took ſo deep an intereſt in their ſucceſs, as to ſend on the following day, a letter (of which I among others have been favoured with a ſight) which is only remarkable for the officious zeal with which he endeavors to make himſelf a party in the ultimate ſucceſs of the MSS. an extract will be ſufficient to ſatisfy the reader—

" My dear Sir,

" Though I ſpoke from memory " when I ſaid that Hunſdon was Lord Cham- " berlain of Elizabeth's houſehold, it was cor- " rectly ſtated—Henry Carey, whom ſhe created " a baron in the firſt year of her reign, had the " charge of her perſon at court—and to ſecure " *us* as to the required date, he was with her " at the Tilbury Camp, in the year 1588, and " had there the care of her perſon.——I think " this ample ſatisfaction upon the ſubject, and " loſe no time in ſending it. This, or any " deeper inquiry, will be *but a poor return for the* " *favour of your unreſerved communication.*"

On the 28th appeared the following:

" The MSS. of Shakſpeare.

" The public look up to us for a faithful " account of theſe important papers—what we " have opportunity to examine, we ſhall, from " time to time, report with the *moſt ſcrupulous* " *fidelity*. *We have read a conſiderable portion* " *of the MSS. Lear*.—In the title page, the " Great Bard profeſſes to have taken the ſtory " from Hollinſhead, and has, in the true ſpirit " of modeſty, apologized for the liberty he took " in departing from the exact ſtatements of " the Chronicle.—There is a letter from " Queen Elizabeth to Shakſpeare, when the " Poet was manager of the Globe, command- " ing him with *his* beſt players to play before " her, and thanking him for ſome verſes which " her Majeſty much admired.—We think it " *will be clearly proved* that all the *degrading* " *nonſenſe*, of his *holding horſes*, &c. will be " found utterly fictitious, and that this great " man was the Garrick of his age, careſſed for " his powers by every one great and illuſtrious, " the gentle friend of genius, and moſt excellent " in the quality he profeſſed—"

On the 23d of April, this paragraph appeared—

" The

" The Shakſperiana, which have been ſo " luckily diſcovered *are now conſidered as ge-* " *nuine by all*, but thoſe, who *illiberally refuſe* " *to be convinced by inſpection.*"

For ſo long a period as this, a period of more than two months, at leaſt, was Mr. Boaden, (a director of the public taſte, and a playwright) *deceived*, nay (if we regard his own account) rendered the *partiſan* of " impoſture," and that too, by " one of the moſt bungling per- " formances of the kind ever exhibited."—During all this time, did Mr. Boaden never " *reflect* " *in his cloſet upon circumſtances recorded?*" * Did he never think of the orthography, the *nne*, the *tye*, and the whole language, " *ſo clogged* " *and confounded by unneceſſary letters?*" Or, if his " eager enthuſiaſm kept him ſo long " in a delirium of blind admiration;" on what was that enthuſiaſm founded? Was it, that " *in the Lear, the MSS. follows the worſt read-* " *ing, where the readings are various? that it* " *cuts the knot of difficulties which a legitimate* " *copy would naturally untie, and that its interpo-* " *lations are not in the manner of Shakſpeare?*" † or was it from " *the juvenile ſtyle*" of the letter

* See Letter, Page 2. † Idem, P. 35.

to Anna Hatherwaye, *the* "*flatneſs*" and "*weakneſs*" of that to Lord Southampton, or "*the execrable jargon*" of the profeſſion of Faith?—

If Mr. Boaden can reconcile all theſe contradictions, if he can *prove* that *abſurdity is a natural ſource of admiration,* or that an "*intel-*" *ligent*" critic could be for months deceived by "an unſkilfully executed and manifeſt delu-" ſion," we ſhall be then ready to concede ſo much to his *ingenuity* as to liſten patiently to his comments; or, perhaps, even to compare *his Vortigern* with the play which is about to appear. If the only objections which Mr. Boaden now brings forward were chronological doubts, or hiſtorical ſcepticiſm—if he had been content to allow to the MSS. the ſame literary excellence, which they at firſt appeared to him ſo eminently to poſſeſs, there would have been at leaſt *a conſiſtency* in his efforts—but in thus heaping Pelion upon Oſſa, in thus going beyond his ſtrength, he but out-herods Herod, and

——"murders impoſſibility, to make,
"What ſhould be faint work."

The preceding obſervations have ſufficiently proved how admirably Mr. Boaden is fitted for

the taſk he has undertaken, and how well he has conſidered the Poet's advice—

" Sumite materiam, veſtris qui ſcribitis æquam,
" Viribus."——

The remainder of theſe pages, ſhall be devoted to the ſpecific arguments which he alledges, and whoſe intrinſic merit ſhall be accurately ſtated and fairly examined.

Previouſly, however, to entering upon this diſcuſſion, it may not be amiſs to obſerve generally upon the queſtion of literary impoſture, that in all known attempts of the kind, the conduct of the parties concerned hath been diametrically oppoſite to that of the poſſeſſor of the MSS. in queſtion—in the former caſes, the reader will invariably find all ſearch to have been eluded, all documents withheld, (ſave in the inſtance of Chatterton, * whoſe forgeries would have remained leſs impeachable, without them) in every feature he will perceive evident defects of ſtyle, palpable anachroniſms, and conſiſtency—only in error.—

* See an account of the ſmall bit of parchment produced to Catcott of Briſtol, in Gregory's Life of Chatterton---and Mr. H. Croft's Love and Madneſs.

Let

Let him then turn his eye to the circumſtance of Mr. Ireland, and he will find, that that gentleman has not only *not* eluded all ſearch, but has invited, nay encouraged *the moſt rigorous ſcrutiny*. He has ſuffered the ableſt antiquaries, and moſt learned men in other reſpects, to examine the MSS. whenever they pleaſed—he has ſhut his doors to no man. And what, let me aſk, is the reſult of this invitation to ſcrutiny? not a diſcovery of defects, nor a conviction of impoſture,—but *an almoſt unanimous attention to their authenticity*; and all this, notwithſtanding the MSS. and their accompaniments, conſiſt of more than 10,000 lines, in the hand writing of the Bard himſelf, more than a hundred volumes (as it ſhould ſeem part of his library) with MSS. annotations; beſides deeds and legal inſtruments, in great number!

From theſe circumſtances, I think it fair to infer, that no doubts can ariſe as to their validity, but in the minds of thoſe perſons whoſe *want of candour or honeſty*, or whoſe *literary deſperation* will not ſuffer them to inſpect, leſt they be forced (which they aſſuredly, in my opinion, would be) to *believe in them*.

I return to Mr. Boaden, who in the opening of his letter juſtly ſtates, that the ultimate deciſion

ciſion upon the authenticity of the MSS. muſt depend on their "*internal* evidence." This *candid* profeſſion, however, is contradicted *in effect*, by nearly three pages of indirect inſinuation againſt the concealment of a fact, which it is allowed on all hands is nugatory.—It is of no importance to the world at large, in what family, or by what means the writings of our divine Bard may have been diſcovered; they need no pedigree and eſcutcheon to prove their deſcent, the ſtamp and animation of their author is to be found in their ſtyle, diction, and ſentiment. Theſe it is impoſſible to forge—

> Pindarum quiſquis ſtudet imitari
> Iule ceratis ope Dædaleâ
> Nititur pennis. HOR.

And it is little to be feared that the ſame age which could produce ſuch performances as Fontainville Foreſt, and the Secret Tribunal, ſhould give birth *even to the faint image* of a Shakſpeare. But in order to obviate every idea of an improbability that ſuch writings ſhould actually exiſt in the preſent day, I will quote an authority which Mr. Boaden will not probably diſpute—that of Mr. Malone,—who conjectures that ſome "*Letters at leaſt*," were left by our Bard, and alſo traces, four or five

five ſources from whence information relative to them may be derived. The families to which I allude, are thoſe of Mr. Bagley, executor of Lady Barnard, (the grand-daughter and laſt deſcendant of Shakſpeare) and of Henry Gilbert, Thomas Higgs, and Samuel Cotton, Eſquires, who married the three daughters (by a former wife) of Sir John Barnard. "* I know not," ſays Mr. Malone, "whether any deſcendants of "theſe, be now living: but if that ſhould be "the caſe, among *their papers* may poſſibly be "found ſome fragment or other relative to "Shakſpeare."

I do not pretend to decide whether it was in any one of theſe families that the MSS. were found by Mr. Ireland, but I ſtate this as an authority which ought to have weight, at leaſt with the friends of Meſſ. Malone and Steevens, *of the general probability of ſuch a diſcovery.*

The circumſtances, however, ſtated by Mr. Ireland, would rather induce us to conclude that the MSS. came from a ſource where *family reaſons* required a concealment of their origin.—

* Johnſon's and Steevens's Edition. Vol. I. p. 40. laſt Edit.

It might be, that the gentleman in queſtion was not very proud of his deſcent, or that the manner in which the papers came into his family, reflects no great honor on his anceſtry, or, indeed, reaſons by no means derogatory to his honor (though, perhaps, affecting his feelings in a particular way) might induce him to bury his name in oblivion. Theſe, are the mere ſuppoſitions of an unbiaſſed judgment, for the only knowledge I have of Mr. Ireland, originated purely in his being the fortunate poſſeſſor of theſe MSS. and the only means I have of forming a judgment on his conduct, were ſupplied by his candour and liberality in ſubmitting them to general inſpection.

The * idle remarks on Mr. Ireland's ſon, and his friendſhip with Mr. Talbot, need no further comment than that, if (as Mr. Boaden inſinuates) that friendſhip were in any way diſturbed by the publication of the MSS. ſuch a rupture would be *fatal* to a forgery of any kind.—

At length we come to ſomething like a regular attack on the MSS. themſelves—which (as far as ſuch a farrago can be reduced to any thing like order) is reducible to theſe heads,

* See Mr. B.'s pamphlet, p. 4.

viz. Objections againſt their appearance and orthography; thoſe againſt the ſtyle and ſentiment; and thoſe drawn from chronological and hiſtorical conſiderations.

The MSS. which were ſhewn Mr. Boaden were (as he ſtates) * ſuch as to "*ſtartle* upon "the *very ſurface* an *intelligent reader*," yet he beheld them, with † the "tremor of the pureſt "delight"—touched "the invaluable relics "with reverential reſpect, and deemed even "exiſtence dearer, as it gave him ſo refined a "ſatisfaction." This enthuſiaſm then could only ariſe from the *merit* of the *compoſition*, and muſt have been deſtroyed, if he had known any thing of the *orthography* of that age, or indeed, had poſſeſſed the ſmalleſt antiquarian knowledge. It was at leaſt *two months* before Mr. Boaden diſcovered that the orthography was "after no received ſyſtem," "was not "uniformly particular," and "that it ſet at "defiance the ſpelling of all periods."—This addition to his information Mr. Boaden has very lately acquired, and I congratulate him, as I do any learner, upon his progreſs in ſcience. But—

* Mr. B.'s pamphlet, p, 13. † Ibid. p. 2.

"A little

" A little learning is a dangerous thing,
" Drink deep, or taſte not of the ſacred ſpring."

I would adviſe him to proſecute his ſtudies with a little more accuracy, and he will find that his objections will vaniſh, as his knowledge increaſes.

The orthography of that age was, indeed, little reducible to any fixed ſtandard, and endleſs varieties crept into general cuſtom, according to the different caprices and diſcordant judgment of individuals. But that a vaſt ſuperfluity of letters is generally obſervable, no man at all converſant with antient writings can doubt. In a MS. collection of poetry, by Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper in the reign of Elizabeth, which was ſhewn me a few days ago by a gentleman of high reputation in the law, I find the following couplet:

" And what rewarde for this *agayne*,
" But *cape* and knee *off ſeelye menne*."

And the following ludicrous ſtory of a jeſter and friar, which I will give at length.

" *Of a* JESTER *and a* FRIAR.

" A *perte Marchannte* ſeekinge to lowte,
" A ſeelye *Fryar* in a greate dowte,
" Sayde Maſ. *Fryer* I marvell *mutche*,
" Whye to the Croſſe *yow doe ſoe crouche*,
" And to the Gallowes croſſes *tooe*
" Of the like *ſubſtaunce* yow doe not ſoe.
" Sir quoth the *Fryer* as *muche* muſe I
" What is the cauſe and reaſon *whye*
" My Miſtreſſe yor. wife being *throweout*
" As well beneathe as her fayre ſnowte
" One ſelf *mettell*, what meaneth this,
" Her *lyppes* not *hyppes* yow uſe to *kys*."

Among the ſame collection is a copy of a letter from Queen Elizabeth to Sir Amias Paulett, in which I find the words

" *Condempne*	" *farre*
" *Ballaunce*	" *paſſeinge*,
" *Merritte*	" *maynteyne*,
" *bidde hur*,	&c.

The following inſtances have been afforded me from the moſt authentic records—

" *oppenned*"	" *ſoomm*"
" *occaſionnes*"	*ſuyte*

" *heere-*

" *heereuppon*"	*ſonne*
" *gelouſe*"	*thenne*
" *orre*"	*mann*
" *onne*"	*themme*

Mr. Malone has preſented the public * with a deed by Shakſpeare, concerning a houſe of one *Ireland's*, found in the Featherſtonaugh family, the orthography of which bears a ſtriking affinity to the deed of gift to Ireland, among the preſent MSS. We find therein the terms—" of thone, of thother partye—" graunted and to Ferme letten—a voyde peece " of Ground—thannunciacion, covenaunt, " without delaie—promiſſe and graunt, cleerlie " acquite—guiftes, &c,"

It is unneceſſary to ſwell this publication, or to tire the reader with more numerous examples of what no one can doubt, that at a time when the Engliſh language knew ſo little of accuracy, a great diverſity of orthography muſt neceſſarily have obtained—one obſervation may not, however, be amiſs. The preſs being yet in an infant ſtate, and the learning of the age, being confined in a great meaſure to the printers, they

* See Johnſon's and Steevens's Ed. p. 90.

took

took the liberty of departing from the copy before them, whenever they thought themſelves capable of improving the orthography, and in ſome caſes perhaps the arrangement.

That this is no ſpeculative idea, may be eaſily proved by a *compariſon of any MSS. with a publication of that age*; which will manifeſtly prove the ſuperior purity of the latter. Thus, it ſhould ſeem, that if any thing like a ſtandard of orthography exiſted at that time, it muſt have been excluſively amongſt the printers.

As *corroborative* proof, we may obſerve, that the Lear, and all the papers *in the hand writing of Shakſpeare* are of *ſimilar* orthography, but that *they differ in this reſpect from the other MSS.* more particularly from thoſe, apparently drawn up by profeſſional men.

It ſeems probable that in any attempt at forgery, a *ſtudious identity* in the conſtruction of words would be preſerved; but in the MSS. we meet with ſuch diverſity as may naturally be ſuppoſed to ariſe from caſual circumſtances—thus, the ſignature "*Elizabeth*" in her own hand is conformable to the modern orthography, and to her exiſting autographs, whilſt

in

in the note attached to the ſame letter, it is ſpelt agreeably to Shakſpeare's general redundancy of letters, " *Elyzabethe.*"

It may not, perhaps, be ſtrictly within the ſcope of this publication, (which was merely to do away any unfavourable impreſſions relative to the *publiſhed* papers) to draw an inſtance from ſome of thoſe, which *though unpubliſhed*, Mr. Ireland liberally diſplays. It ſeems, therefore, very appoſite to the preſent purpoſe, to obſerve that the name of *Spenſer*, the Poet, was ſpelt in his life-time, and in ſeveral editions of his works, in two ways—the one with an *s*, the other with a *c*, in the laſt ſyllable,—and in a MS. note by Shakſpeare, in the edition of 1590, " by Edmund *Spenſer*," the name *Spencer* occurs—ſo little was the regard paid by Shakſpeare to the fetters of cuſtom, and ſo ſlight his attention " in the ſpontaneous flow " of ſoul," to ſo miſerable an obſtacle as the arrangement or accumulation of letters!—— " Half the labour (ſays Mr. B.) beſtowed upon " unneceſſary letters would have cleared away " the myſtery,"—but this is a labour more likely to be felt by the compoſitor or editor of a journal, than by a Shakſpeare, to whom the drudgery of correction had been labour indeed.

With the conſiſtency of a frigid critic Mr. B. blames the Poet at one time for a *neglect of attention to his MSS. by the omiſſion of punctuation*, and at another, for his *ſcrupulous care in numbering the lines*. This is, indeed, the Worm reviling the Oak.—We may further obſerve, that *theſe facts*, in *themſelves*, furniſh ſtrong *arguments againſt impoſture*. Would a forger incumber himſelf with unneceſſary letters after the *fatal model* of Chatterton?—Would he not rather have ſtudiouſly avoided the rock on which that youth ſplit? Would he not follow the *orthography* as carefully as he muſt have done the *character* of the MSS. of that age? Or is it to be ſuppoſed that he would in one inſtance lay himſelf open to detection by *omitting* the *labour* of punctuation, when in another he ſubmitted to the *unneceſſary* and *futile drudgery* of numeration?

With reſpect to the ſuppoſition of forgery, drawn from the appearance of the papers, I find little ſtated by Mr. B. worthy of remark. He is told, indeed by the *firſt artiſts* of the country that "*they* have no doubt but that the "pen and ink drawings are modern." Who are theſe artiſts? and what particular art is it they exerciſe? If the liberal and enlightened

pro-

professors of painting * be alluded to, they will not certainly pronounce so *decisive a verdict, especially* on the ground of *professional* knowledge.

The coloured drawings of Bassanio and Shylock perfectly resemble the inferior productions of that age, and the name "J. Hoskins," which appears on the former, is that of an *artist* of that day, though it must undoubtedly be considered as one of his earliest attempts. I have heard it rumoured as an objection, that at the time of Elizabeth there were no *tinted drawings*, which the above are denominated. Nothing, however, is more certain, than that at and before that time the first masters used, in their sketches, the method of tinting adopted by Hoskins,—in proof of my assertion, I refer the reader to the sketches of Julio Romano and

* Those painters, whom the author of this review has consulted, and who are not probably *inferior* to any whom Mr. B. may have applied to, uniformly agree that the productions in question bear, in their appearance, nothing contradictory to the known history of painting.—They are at a loss to determine *how* the *untutored sketches* of the Bard himself, should be *subjected* to the *rigid rules* of *critical investigation*. A rude outline with a pen and ink must in all ages be nearly the same, the only difference is to be found in the skill of the performer, and the difference of his materials.

Titian *before*, and of Reubens *in the time of Shakſpeare*.

Mr. Boaden declares * that the ſignature to the Deed of Gift "totally departs from the "authentic ſignature of the Poet," to which broad aſſertion, we have merely to oppoſe the *teſtimony of our ſenſes*. If ever a conformity appeared between different examples of the ſame hand writing it is to be found in this ſame deed when compared either with the other † autographs in Mr. Ireland's poſſeſſion, or with the fac ſimiles of Shakſpeare's name contained in the laſt edition of ‡ Johnſon's and Steevens's work—a compariſon which any gentleman has it in his power to make.

* Letter, p. 46.

† The compariſon of ſignatures is not always ſatisfactory proof of authenticity, on account of diverſities which occur in the ſame perſon's writing at different times. In the Britiſh Muſeum are to be ſeen three ſignatures, unaccompanied by any date, of the earls of Southampton; one of the father, and two ſaid to be of the ſon, the friend of Shakſpeare; the two latter on compariſon appear to be widely different from each other, and from Mr. Ireland's MSS.

In general, however, ſignatures, though agreeing perhaps upon the *whole*, have ſome *individual* diſtinctions more or leſs minute, according to the different circumſtances which may have affected them.

‡ Letter, p. 103.

We

We are next treated, in the letter to Mr. Steevens, with the old ſtory O. C. P. which the author terms "pithy and profitable"—That he has found it *profitable* I muſt ſuppoſe, ſince he has *ſold it* to the public, both *in his Newſpaper* and *Pamphlet*; but as to the "pith" I am yet at a loſs to diſcover it, except that it ſeems levelled generally *againſt all old writings*. I will, in return, take the liberty of relating a *fact*, which ſeems to apply forcibly to the queſtion of authenticity in the Shakſpeare MSS.

A claim, not long ago, was ſet up, in a court of juſtice, in ſupport of which, deeds and other papers, with more than twenty ſignatures, ſaid to be of the *ſame hand writing*, were adduced. The counſel on the other ſide finding, on examination, that every one of theſe ſignatures *exactly coincided*, deſired the witneſs who produced them to ſign his name twenty times on a ſheet of paper which he gave him for the purpoſe—when, although a general ſimilarity of character pervaded the whole, each ſignature evidently bore a ſpecific diſtinction—this circumſtance detected one of the blackeſt attempts at forgery that ever occurred. Let us now try the MSS. in Mr. Ireland's poſſeſſion by this teſt: we ſhall find the ſignatures, and indeed the hand writing in general, not in the ſtiff

formality of a copyiſt, but in the careleſs haſte of an original; not in a ſtudied uniformity, but containing a *ſtrong* though *general reſemblance.*

One deed or one letter may be forged, perhaps, with tolerable accuracy, eſpecially by a perſon who has the prototype before him; but who can ſuppoſe that the ſame perſon ſhould be *equally ſkilled* in forgeries of *ſo many different kinds*, and of *ſo vaſt an extent?* The NUMBER of documents would be alone, I ſhould think, a very ſtrong authenticating circumſtance, ſince every *additional paper* would furniſh an *additional opportunity* of detection: but VARIETY ſuperadded to NUMBER makes the taſk of impoſture *next to an impoſſibility.* This VARIETY is to be ſeen among the preſent MSS. in it's greateſt latitude. We here behold VERSES, DEEDS, LETTERS, MEMORANDUMS, DRAWINGS, and publiſhed BOOKS—We ſee them in every ſtage of preſervation—from the extreme of *neatneſs* to that of *decay*—We find them modified by all the caſualties of time and accident—in one caſe, the INK retains it's original freſhneſs; in another, it is almoſt illegible; in a third, it appears to have corroded the paper, and in ſome inſtances to have produced the ſingular

ſingular effect of blanching the paper round the edge of the letters.*

Let us hear then no more of the *pitiful inſinuations* that the poſſeſſor of theſe MSS. "*draws*, "*engraves*," that "*he has a taſte for the black* "*letter*," &c.—Were his ſkill and abilities ten times ſuperior to what I doubt not he poſſeſſes, it would be difficult to imagine him capable of ſuch a *verſatility of* TALENT.

Mr. Boaden certainly has not evinced his "*intelligence*" as a *critic*, in his obſervations on the *form* and *ſemblance* of the MSS. What ſhall we ſay of him, when he diſcuſſes the ſpirit and genius of *their ſtyle?* He, who would judge the *bard of nature*, ſhould himſelf at leaſt participate *his feelings*, ſhould have caught a breath of that vivid inſpiration, a ſpark of that poetic fire, a beam from that frenzied eye,

> "Which glanced from Heav'n to Earth, from
> "Earth to Heaven."

Aſk you if the *intelligent critic* above mentioned anſwers to that deſcription?—turn to

* This circumſtance may be accounted for on chemical principles; I have been informed by a gentleman of very ſuperior information in this kind of ſubject—that only *time* can have *produced* the *preſent effect*.

" Fontainville Foreſt," judge " the Secret " Tribunal," examine the *profeſſed imitation* of " *Shakſpeare* in *his* Vortigern—" Weary, ſtale, " flat, and unprofitable!" But let us hear *his* peculiar *opinion* of the Bard—the character of his muſe (if we would believe this oracle of criticiſm) " is not *ſimplicity*."

The writer, who above all others could

> " With rapture glow, with pity move,
> " Rouſe with revenge, or melt with love;"

who touched the manners in comedy, as he did the morals in tragedy, with ſo fine a ſtroke, and ſo diſcriminating a genius, *was not ſimple!* Mr. Boaden has found, I preſume, ſome *juſtifiable criticiſm* on a *particular* paſſage or two, where the illuſtrious Shakſpeare has fallen from himſelf, (for who is *all perfect?*) and degenerated into weakneſs; and upon this ground has ventured to paſs judgment upon the *character* of Shakſpeare's *muſe*. After this, ſhall we be ſurpriſed to find *ſimilar judgment* pervade the *detail* of his *criticiſm?* It had been aſſerted by Mr. Ireland that Shakſpeare's ſtyle was without *effort*—that the aſſertion was *correct*, we have hiſtorical proof

in

in the celebrated * anecdote of Ben. Johnſon, or if that were inſufficient, we need but exerciſe an unprejudiced judgment in the peruſal of his works—urged by the impetuoſity of his imagination, he was continually hurrying onward to the *grand* and *ſtriking* objects of his poem, he touched the *inferior* parts with as *careleſs*, as he did the *important* ones with a *maſterly* hand,—and in all caſes his errors were rather thoſe of haſte than of formality. Writing thus, and writing with *genuine ſimplicity*, he was ſometimes incorrect, and this incorrectneſs at once gave room for his own ſubſequent alterations, and furniſhed the players and printers with an excuſe (in their opinion) for producing thoſe heaps of ſtage traſh with which they encumbered his works. "He might have written (ſays Ma-" lone) *without a blot*,† and three or four years " afterwards, he might have impoſed *additional* " *ſcenes alſo without a blot*."

Whether Mr. Ireland's MSS. be or be not the moſt *correct* tranſcript that Shakſpeare ever made of his Lear, it ſeems probable that it contains none of the foreign interpolations,

* See in Johnſon's and Steevens's edition, Rowe's Life of Shakſpeare.

† Johnſon's and Steevens's Ed. p. 46.

though

though it may poſſibly want the ſubſequent retrenchments and even additions of the Bard himſelf. Mr. B. is enabled to decide that the writer of this MS. *at firſt* uſed only the ſecond folio edition, "although *in the courſe of the play* "he acquires evidently a copy of Butler's "quarto of 1608.—"The folio of 1623 he "*does not appear to have ſeen.*" The abſurdity of the remark is too evident to need a comment. The diſcordance of the MSS. *both from the folio* and *quarto*, proves, in my idea, that it was taken from neither, ſince the author of a forgery would at leaſt have been conſiſtent when he had a choice of ſubjects to copy from. I freely acknowledge that one or two inſtances of inferiority in Mr. Ireland's MSS. would not appear to me to affect it's authenticity—Do we not know that Shakſpeare himſelf almoſt re-wrote Romeo and Juliet?

But if we come to the *particular inſtances* cited by Mr. Boaden, we ſhall behold in a ſtronger light his critical powers, and be enabled to form a *ſpecial* judgment of the abilities of this *cenſor-general*.

Cordelia, it is ſaid, could never be made to *announce the entrance* of her *ſuitors*—might we not purſue a contrary mode of argument, and believe

believe that *this* was one of thoſe maſterly touches of nature in which Shakſpeare ſo eminently excelled, but which often evaporate under the *groſs touch* of editors and commentators? The perſevering and *humble* obedience of Cordelia might induce her after *all the harſh treatment of her father*, to ſhew herſelf *ſtill prompt* in the performance, even of the moſt *trifling* duty, and it would be conſiſtent with her *gentleneſs*, on the approach of ſtrangers *to conceal* every mark of diſquiet and domeſtic uneaſineſs.

Of the paſſages "*altered*," as Mr. B. chuſes to expreſs himſelf, we have now a copious detail, and though I by no means think it neceſſary to eſtabliſh the MSS. that they ſhould always contain the *beſt reading*, I think I can clearly prove that they do not "invariably follow the *worſt*," and that Mr. B. at leaſt in many inſtances has been *very unfortunate* in ſelecting the objects of his criticiſm. As it is very probable that Shakſpeare, who wrote as it were "*ſtans pede in uno*," did not *always* ſtop to *numerate* his ſyllables, or to *punctuate* his periods (certainly *not the latter*) we may conclude that his tranſcript would not, in every inſtance, *divide the verſes exactly as metre required*—A word, or ſyllable might be ſubjoined to the *end* of one line, which the eye of a reader, at all

converſant with the ſubject might eaſily carry forward to the ſucceeding line.

Upon this view of the ſubject, though I own with a great degree of diffidence, I have ventured to give the execration of Lear, from the MSS. with *ſuch punctuation*, and *arrangement* as I ſhould imagine it to have really received in performance.

" It may be ſo—hark*en* Nature! hear dear Goddeſs!
" Suſpend thy purpoſe, if thou *wouldeſt* make
" This creature ~~frightful!~~—into her womb convey
" Sterility!
" Dry up in her the organs of increaſe:
" And let no babe ſpring *thence* to honour her.
" But if ſhe muſt teem, *create* her child of ſpleen;
" And let it channel wrinkles, on her brow
" Of youth, with *accent* tears; turn all her pains
" To laughter and contempt; that ſhe may know
" How ſharp and like a ſerpent's tooth it is,
" To have a thankleſs child."

The *deviations* from the MSS. " *hearken*" in the firſt, and " *wouldeſt*" in the ſecond line, are only ſuch *ſyllabic extenſion* as a ſpeaker would almoſt *unavoidably* introduce. The *inſertion* of *thence* or ſome ſuch word, in the ſixth line, and the omiſſion of *rude*, before *laughter* in the tenth, infer, perhaps, a more ſcrupulous attention to metre than that age was remarkable for,

and

and the word *create* in the ſeventh line, may, by a very common licence, be allowed to paſs as *two* ſhort ſyllables or *one* long one.* The break in the fourth line ſeems juſtified by the ſenſe, and is perfectly conſonant to the ſtyle of Shakſpeare in many parts of this ſame play—the word *accent* for *ſharp*, in the ninth, is at leaſt equal to *cadent* it's modern ſubſtitute.

It will perhaps be objected, that the *neceſſity* of ſuch *alterations* implies a *defect* in the MSS. but the *ſame conſideration* ſeems to *ſtrengthen* their authenticity; for however incorrect *an author* may be in *his original* tranſcript, it is hardly to be conceived that a *forger* would *voluntarily* expoſe himſelf to critical *objection*, by *unneceſſary* ſuperfluity or omiſſion.

The ſecond quotation of Mr. B. ſeems to eſtabliſh the probability of *haſte* in ſome inſtances of Shakſpeare's writing, by the introduction of "play this part again," which ſhould be *marginal*, into *the text*.

* Mr. Malone obſerves that the words father, brother, mother, and many of ſimilar ſound, were uſed by Shakſpeare as *monoſyllables*. See note in ſc. 4. act 3 of Lear, page 154. Johnſon and Steevens's laſt edition.

The MSS. preſent us with this beautiful idea,

> " Kill thy phyſician, and the fee beſtow
> " Upon the *foul*-diſeaſe."

Calling to immediate recollection the " *mind* " *diſeaſed*" of Macbeth, but which Mr. Boaden with *equal delicacy* of taſte, and *accuracy* of judgment, would change to " the *foul* diſeaſe. This may have been *one* of the corrections which occurred to him from " the reflection " in his cloſet upon *circumſtances recorded*, and " by applying to *things* the *rule of Chronology*."

I paſs over ſeveral paſſages ſelected by Mr. B. *merely* as ſpecimens of incorrectneſs, to come to thoſe, on which he attempts to diſplay his *critical* powers. On the paſſage

> " Truth's a dog that muſt to kennel, while my lady *brach*
> " may ſtand by the fire and ſtink."

A learned * emendation is offered of *broach* for *brach*—Mr. Boaden is, perhaps, ignorant that

* In theſe emendations Mr. B. ſeems to be by no means fortunate, a little further on he offers to correct the words " diſſolution of ſtanding *armies*" by ſubſtituting " *amities*." Now

that *brach,* from the Italian *bracco,* is applied to *bitches* of the hunting kind.

" *Edgar.* Hound or ſpaniel brache or lym."
Act 3. *Sc.* 9.

It does not appear that the ſenſe would *neceſſarily* require *either* of thoſe words. Yet if any be adopted, it cannot be Mr. Boaden's, however *ingenious* his conjecture may appear.

Not *more* fortunate is the critical acumen diſplayed on the line

" And with *Adam-like* nakedneſs, out-face
" The wind and perſecution of the ſky."

The objection againſt the *metre* may be anſwered by inſtances of the uſe of the *dactylic* foot in this *very ſpeech,* as well as in other parts of Shakſpeare.

" *Edgar.* Sometimes with *lunatic* banns, ſometimes with prayers."

And in Othello:

" To counſel Caſſio to this *parallel* courſe."

Now this paſſage, if genuine, muſt require the former expreſſion, becauſe that part of the ſpeech alluded to is an enumeration of political evils---" dearth," " diviſions in ſtate," &c. among which, the diſſolution of a long ſtanding army is to be reckoned of the higheſt importance.

With

With regard to the *ſenſe*, Mr. B. ſeems to ſuppoſe that there muſt exiſt in the meaning of the poet a ſimilar confuſion to that which muſt have entered his own head: when Edgar likens *his nakedneſs* to that of *Adam*, it by no means follows, that the ſimilitude *muſt alſo* be applied to the *weather*.

Edgar, in his ſoliloquy, exclaims—

" Poor Tom!—Poor *Edgar!*
" That indeed is ſomething—*I* am *nothing!*"

Which our critic *ſagaciouſly* blames, as an *imprudent diſcloſure* of his name to *the winds on a ſolitary heath*; and yet he recommends the common reading, *againſt which the ſame* objection lies:

" Poor Turlegood——Poor Tom!
" That ſomething, yet Edgar, I nothing am."

The difference, however, in poetical excellence, ſeems to be much in *favour* of the former, as the immediate tranſition from *poor Tom* to *poor Edgar*, is more pathetic, and more conſonant to the *natural flow* of feeling. In this arrangement too, the words " *that* indeed is " ſomething," ſeem juſtly *applied to the recollection* of his former ſituation; if we follow the other

other reading, we ſhall be led into the abſurdity of ſuppoſing him to ſet a value upon the ſtate of "a Bedlam beggar."

From theſe and ſome ſimilar compariſons, in which the *reader* will not, perhaps, be always of the ſame opinion with the *critic*, Mr. B. *concludes*, that *to read the new publication*, was a "*ſource of aſtoniſhment and laughter*."---*Aſtoniſhment* at ſuch a deciſion muſt be felt by every one who has conſulted thoſe paragraphs of the Oracle, which we have ſelected---and *laughter* will probably be the *conſequence* of *obſerving ſuch an inconſiſtency*, in the different opinions of the ſame writer.

The *omiſſions* of the MSS. come next to be conſidered; but as theſe, however plainly proved, will afford no *concluſive argument*, I paſs over them, to conſider what Mr. B. calls the "*bold* and *hazardous* interpolations." A few words in the dialogue of Lear and Edgar are firſt cited, which are not probably of the higheſt poetical merit, yet cannot certainly be decided *not to be Shakſpeare's*.

The other inſtances I ſhall give in their order. Firſt, the deſcription of Dover cliff:

"This

" This cliff, this wonder of nature,
" Whoſe chalky ſides guard this our ſacred iſle
" 'Gainſt the rude ſea, that doth in choler
" Rage, foam, and ſpend itſelf, till't come to nothing."

The pathetic exclamation of Lear---

" Ha, Goneril! what flatter this white beard?
" And when the poor dog did fawn and lick thee,
" Didſt beat him out of doors?"

His tender recollection of Cordelia's good qualities, and his revenge for her death, both conceived in terms highly poetical---

" Her voice was ever ſoft
" And low—*ſweet muſic o'er the ripling ſtream!*
" O yes, by Heavens! 'twas I kill'd the ſlave,
" That did round thy ſoft neck the murderous
" And damned cord entwine."——

" Inſtance *the laſt*," is the ſpeech of Kent, preſerving in the moment of death, all his characteriſtic firmneſs and fidelity.

" Thanks, Sir; but I go to that unknown land,
" That chains each pilgrim faſt within its ſoil;
" By living men *moſt ſhunn'd, moſt honoured.*
" *Still* my good maſter this *ſame journey* took;
" He calls me, I am content, and ſtraight obey.
" Then *farewell*, world, the *buſy ſcene* is done;
" *Kent lived moſt true—Kent dies moſt like a man.*"

Each

Each of theſe ſpecimens poſſeſſes ſufficient merit to recommend itſelf to *real* judges of poetry. They are not, perhaps, the *moſt finiſhed* of Shakſpeare's productions; but they beſpeak themſelves ſo truly *his*, that (to *retort* Mr. Boaden's aſſertion on another occaſion), "he "who can believe theſe lines to be *interpola-* "*tions*, has neither taſte in ſentiment, nor diſ- "cernment in compoſition."

With ſuch ſentiments, we ſhall, no doubt, fully ſubſcribe to the authenticity of Shakſpeare's ſignature at the end of this play: and when we recollect *how long it was* after Mr. Boaden firſt ſaw the MSS. *before he doubted*, we ſhall with *difficulty* believe that they could have been ſuch "an unſkilfully executed and manifeſt deluſion."

It is *impoſſible* that ſo *ſagacious* a critic could have been miſled at firſt, by MSS. containing ſo *many* "groſs impurities:" we muſt, therefore, ſuppoſe, that he is one of thoſe who can

——————"diſpute,
"Confute, change ſides, and ſtill confute:"

and that *either his former* or his *preſent* profeſſions were the production of *ingenuity*, the *ſportive exerciſe* of deceptive talent. The diffi-

culty is, to *decide*, when Mr. B. is in *jeſt*, and when in *earneſt*; *what* his *meaning is*, or whether he has any *meaning* at all.

" Quo teneam vultus mutantem Protea nodo?"

If there be any fixed *ſtandard* by which to try *his taſte*, it muſt be found in his own poetical effuſions. But here again we are at a loſs. He ſurely could not intend *ſeriouſly* to produce, as *imitations of Shakſpeare, his* * *Vortigern and Rowena*;---the deſpicable nonſenſe which he puts into the mouths of his heroes, may ſerve, perhaps, in his opinion, as a burleſque upon ſome other production; but as he has choſen to preſent them *twice* to the public, he may *poſſibly* conceive that they *poſſeſs ſome intrinſic* merit. In deference to ſuch an opinion, we will ſelect two or three ſpeeches.---Hengiſt is made to deſcribe, with much *preciſion* and *exactneſs*, the origin and nature of his expedition:---

" Moſt noble King, from *Germany* we come,
" And *Saxony*, the province of *our birth*;
" Th' occaſion is, to tender our aſſiſtance
" *Even* unto *you*, or to ſome *other* Prince."

* See *Extracts* at the end of Mr. B's Letter.

With

With equal judgment this *accurate* Prince thus verſifies the calendar, in giving an account of *his religion*---

" For our *religion*, King, know, that *we worſhip*
" *Woden* eſpecially, who gives name
" To the *fourth day* of every *week* of time.
" Next to him we adore the goddeſs *Frea*,
" *From* whom the *ſixth day* claims *its honoured name*."

" *We, worſhip, Woden!*"---*wonderfully well!* This is, *indeed*, a mouthful of *alliteration!* Nor is *Vortigern* behind hand in *depth* of obſervation and *elegance* of manners:

" Warriors, I need not ſpend the time
" In *vain* and *empty* ſalutations—*Courteſy*
" Should ſtill be found in *courts*; or they muſt change
" *Their nature*, and that gentle power *its* name.

Ohe jam ſatis! " If theſe were intended as " bones for a critic cur," they are " delicate " ones, indeed." But if Mr. Boaden has been " flattered" into a belief that " *they merit to be* " *collected*;" if he adduces them in the hope that they will eclipſe the *true Vortigern*; or if he thinks they, in the " moſt trifling degree, " reſemble the great poet;" it would be uſeleſs to waſte words upon the ſubject, *ſuch abſurdity* is out of the reach of *argument*. One circumſtance, however, relative to their publication,

ſeems to deſerve *ſerious* animadverſion: from the *equivocal manner* of their appearance, the public was left to ſuppoſe that they were actually extracted *from Mr. Ireland's MSS.* and that gentleman lay under the *imputation* of palming upon the world this "execrable jargon," as the production of Shakſpeare.

The *critical* obſervations of Mr. Boaden on the *ſtyle* of the remaining *Papers* will be beſt *anſwered* by recalling the reader's attention to the paragraphs in the Oracle relative to the *ſame productions.*

LETTER TO ANNA HATHERWAYE.

ORACLE.

This letter is "diſtinguiſhed for the utmoſt *delicacy* "*of paſſion*, and *poetical* "*ſpirit.*"

JAMES BOADEN, ESQ.

"*This letter* muſt, if genuine, have been written "at ſixteen years of age.—"The expreſſions *have no*"*thing of the character of our* "*proſe, in that period of our* "*literature.* The verſes "(that follow in Mr. Ire"land's publication) are wor"thy of no *other* notice, than "that they are *metrically* "ſmooth." Page 40. of a Letter to G. Steevens, Eſq.

LETTER

LETTER TO LORD SOUTHAMPTON.

ORACLE.

" A diſcovery relative to " Lord Southampton, re- " flecting *immortal honour* " on the bounty of the one, " and the *modeſty* of the " other. The conviction " produced upon *our* mind is " *ſuch* as to make all *ſcepti-* " *ciſm ridiculous.*"

JAMES BOADEN, ESQ.

" The *judicious* critic *at* " *once* perceives the *modern* " *colouring* of diction, and " flow of language." Page 42.

Quære, Are we to underſtand that Mr. Boaden is *not a judicious critic*, or that he has only *become ſo within theſe few months?* If the latter, it might be ſerviceable to the public, to divulge the *ſecret* of ſo *ſudden* an acquiſition of judgment.

THE PROFESSION OF FAITH.

ORACLE.

" A profeſſion of his reli- " gious faith, *rationally pious* " and *grandly expreſſed!*"

JAMES BOADEN, ESQ.

" Nothing but the *puerile* " *quaintneſs* and *idiomatic* " *poverty* of a *methodiſt rhap-* " *ſody! Exquiſite nonſenſe!* " *Execrable jargon!*" P. 42, 43, 44.

It

It may be of uſe to conſider what Mr. B. thus calls *exquiſite nonſenſe*, and *execrable jargon*.--- The paſſages alluded to, are the following ſublime and pathetic effuſions of piety :---

* " Yet will I hope, for even the poor priſo-
" ner, when bound with galling irons, *even he*
" *will hope for pity*; and when the tears of
" *ſweet repentance bathe his wretched* pillow, he
" then looks and hopes for pardon."

" Great God, receive me to thy boſom,
" where all is *ſweet content and happineſs*; all
" is bliſs: where *diſcontent* is *never heard*; but
" where *one bond* of *friendſhip* unites all men!
" Forgive, O Lord, all our ſins; and with thy
" great goodneſs take us all *to thy breaſt*."

It ſeems that Mr. B. is diſpleaſed with the metaphors of " ſnow diſtilling from the leafy " tree," and of " the chicken, that under the " covert of her ſpreading wings receives her " little brood." They are *both* perfectly *correct*, Snow diſtils *rapidly*, though almoſt *inſenſibly* from the *leafy* tree, as the mind ſinks under the contemplation of a ſubject too mighty for it's graſp: and a more exquiſitely beautiful picture of parental tenderneſs cannot eaſily be conceived than that of the Mother-Bird hover-

* See Profeſſion of Faith, in Mr. Ireland's folio publication.

ing

ing over her young, and anxiouſly protecting them from injury. Theſe intereſting pictures cannot juſtly be ſaid to poſſeſs "the *modern* "colouring of diction and flow of language," at leaſt, if we are to form a judgment of *modern productions* by thoſe of the *luminary* before us. He, it is true, deals in metaphors, but certainly of a *different ſtamp* from thoſe above quoted; in his pamphlet, after he has ſuffered us "to "*drink of the rivers*," he "*delights* our ears "with the *roaring* of its fall," which is undoubtedly making a very *œconomic* uſe of a poetical figure; and in deſcribing "the *cloudy* "*incruſtations* of a gem," he diſplays an *equal* knowledge of *Metaphor* and *Mineralogy*. Were we to wander beyond the limits of his pamphlet,—were we to refer to the *dramatic* works of this great man, we ſhould find in every page *tropes* of a new and ſingular nature; ſome where ſound prevail over ſenſe, and others where the ſound and the ſenſe were alike confuſed, ſtrange and incomprehenſible. We ſhould find * "*Mewling Mam-* "*mets* at the nurſe's breaſt," "Soldiers *ſpecu-* "*lating* innumerable wounds," "Heavy clouds "in ſummer's haunches," and "*Cuſtom* which "no earthly *breath* may e'er withſtand;" to-

* See Secret Tribunal, and extracts from Vortigern in Mr. B.'s pamphlet.

gether

gether with others alike novel and amuſing; yet this is the Knight errant, ſo ſtrenuous for "the *credit* of Engliſh *literature*,"—the *Arthegal*, who by one ſtroke of his critic ſword is to lay in ruins the fabrick of poetical impoſture!

Thus far we have followed Mr. B. in his *critical inveſtigation* of the papers themſelves,—let us now accompany him to the "myſterious "*cloſet*," where his "doubts were firſt accu-"mulated" from "*reflections* upon *circumſtances* "recorded."—Here it ſeems is his ſtrong hold, here he "applies to *things* the *rule* of chrono-"logy," and "to *perſons* the *records* of biogra-"phy;"—here, he weighs in the balance the *hitherto* "invaluable relics," and lo! they are found wanting!

"In *what manner* diſtruſt firſt entered his mind," *Mr. B.* thinks it "*unneceſſary* to ſtate." We may, however, entertain a *different* opinion, if we imagine that any thing like *perſonality* entered into his motives. Whether this were, or were not the caſe, may probably appear "from "the reflection" in *our own* "cloſet" upon the following facts, which, though not "*recorded*," are *ſtrictly true*.

On the day on which Mr. Ireland's publication of the MSS. appeared (the 24th of December) Mr. Boaden ſent to borrow it, in "order *(profeſſedly)* to make extracts *for his newſpaper*. The former gentleman not deſiring *ſuch ſupport*, declined this *very friendly* offer; and Mr. B. therefore ſent to Mr. White, of Fleet-ſtreet, who, ignorant of his intentions, lent him the volume. The appearance of an *extract* in the Oracle of the next day, diſcovered this *not very polite* proceeding to Mr. Ireland, who, on making it known to Mr. White, that gentleman begged Mr. B. to return the book, which he did, accompanied by a note, wherein he thanks Mr. White for a view of "the moſt *ſplendid impoſi-* "*tion* he had ever beheld."

It is *poſſible* that theſe circumſtances may have given riſe in the mind of Mr. B. to a *degree* of *petulant animoſity*, which is *ever unfavourable* to the exerciſe of *judgment*, and which may even *pervert* the moſt *ſtriking* and *palpable evidence*. But leaving all conſiderations of a perſonal nature, let us come to the *chronological* and *hiſtorical* objections: theſe are queſtions of *fact*, and afford a *certain*, *ſpecial* ground of *argument*. We will begin with the letter ſent by Queen

Elizabeth, in her own *hand-writing*, to Shakſpeare.

QUEEN ELIZABETH's LETTER.

"In the outſet of this examination" there is "a *viſual* preſumption in *favor* of this letter," from the agreement of the ſignature with the known autographs of that Queen.—So far Mr. Boaden.

There is alſo *another* preſumption in it's favor from the known patronage afforded to our poet by her Majeſty, who, according to Rowe,* "not only had his plays acted before her, but "gave him *many gracious marks of her favour.*" This *letter* appears, and very naturally, without a date; but I ſhall preſume to give it the date of 1588, for reaſons which will preſently appear. At that time Shakſpeare was about twenty-four years of age, (being born in April 1564) and it is *triumphantly aſked how* he could *ſo eaſily* have riſen into notice, and have been engaged in the *direction* of a company of players. In anſwer to this, I ſhall obſerve (with the Editor of the Oracle) that the old "Story of Shakſpeare's

* See Rowe's Life of Shakſpeare in Johnſon and Steevens's laſt edition.

"*holding*

" *holding* horſes" at the play-houſe door, ſeems to *deſerve very little credit*; and that he moſt probably roſe, " like the Garrick of his age," to immediate and diſtinguiſhed notice. Such at leaſt are the *joint* opinions * of the *annotators*, Meſſrs. Malone and Steevens, who ſuppoſe (I think very rationally) that Shakſpeare, when he *fled* the *fury* of Sir Thomas Lacy, while *yet* very young, might find an eaſy admittance to the ſtage, having a *townſman* (if not *relation*) of the name of Green, *then* a *player* of ſome eminence; and if ſo, is it all *ſurpriſing* that the *ſuperiority* of his talents ſhould have enabled him very ſoon to take a leading part in the management of the Theatre? †

Thus it appears that it is *far from improbable* that Elizabeth ſhould write to Skakſpeare to come with " *his beſt*" actors, to wait upon her. But it is added, " the Lord Leiceſter will be " with us." Now, ſays Mr. B. the *lateſt* period at which *this Lord* could have attended " Holli- " day fooleries was in the year 1585."—Strange

* See page 63, Johnſon and Steevens's laſt edition.

† Since writing the above, I am informed, that within theſe few days, a deed has been diſcovered which will put this *matter beyond all queſtion*, and which will in *due time* be laid before the *public* at *large!*

indeed! that this "*intelligent* critic" ſhould have "applied to *things* the *rule* of chronology" ſo imperfectly. I will venture to remind him of the tranſactions of the year 1588. On the 31ſt of July, the terrible Armada, which had ſo long threatened our iſland, was ſeen for the *laſt* time flying before our victorious fleet—within a *day* or *two after* the Queen entered London in ſolemn proceſſion, attended by the Lords Hunſdon and Leiceſter.—*Each* of theſe noblemen had attended her at the camp at Tilbury; the former having the command of 34,000 foot and 2000 horſe, and the latter of 22,000 foot and 1000 horſe; and being *both very high in her confidence*, they, no doubt, participated in the entertainments which were ſo abundantly diſplayed upon the occaſion. The expreſſion of *public joy* on this glorious *event* was not *confined to one mode of rejoicing*, nor to a ſhort duration of enjoyment. Plays, Balls, and every kind of entertainment were exhibited *throughout* the kingdom for a *conſiderable length of time*; and it is very probable that it was *upon* this *occaſion*, that Shakſpeare was honoured with the favor of his Royal Miſtreſs.

There is one more objection, which may ſerve as a ſpecimen of Mr. Boaden's "Logic *never* "perverted by *ſophiſm*."—The *Globe Theatre* was

was not built *till* 1596! Indeed! and how is this proved? Why *truly by a contract* in 1599 to build a Playhouſe like that *newly-erected* one, called *the Globe.*

Now, as Playhouſes do not ariſe with the celerity of muſhrooms, I wiſh to know *how* Mr. Boaden *proves* "to *demonſtration,*" that the *exact* term of *three years* is ſpecified by the words "*newly-erected*;" or why it may not equally well refer to ten, nay to twenty or thirty years back?

In 1588 Lodowine, ſays Mr. B. was then *twelve years old,* and ſagaciouſly *infers* that "*he could not* act any part, forgetting the characters of *Arthur, Rutland,* &c." On further examination we ſhall find this *very circumſtance* to be in *favor* of the MSS.; for we *there* find 2s. ſet down, as a *preſent,* to *Lodowine,* whoſe *youth* alone could occaſion the *ſmallneſs* of the ſum, ſince in 1609, at the age of *thirty-three,* he received a ſalary of *thirty ſhillings per week.*

The promiſſory note to Heming is dated 1589, it mentions work done at the *Globe,* thus *agree-*

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ing with the ſuppoſitions neceſſary to underſtand the other papers; but agreement of *this kind* is not the character of impoſture; one *cannot* believe that ſo *many* authorities ſhould bear together upon one *point*, and *that* the *offspring* of *falſhood*.

We meet with no other chronological objections until we come to the deed of gift to *Ireland*: here indeed we have, as before, good round *aſſertion*, but nothing like *proof*. This deed contains a bequeſt of the play of *Lear*, among others, and is dated *October* 25, 1604; but we are told that the *Lear* was not *then written*, an argument, certainly *very convincing*, *if* it had the *leaſt foundation*. How ſtands the fact? Mr. Malone* ſhrewdly gueſſes, mark *gueſſes*, that it was not written till *after* the acceſſion of James the Firſt to the crown of England, which happened, *ſays Mr. Boaden*, on the 24th of *October* 1604; but which happened, *ſays Hiſtory*, on the 24th of *March* 1602-3. So much for accuracy of dates, and ſkill in compariſon!

* See Attempt to aſcertain the Chronology of Shakſpeare's Plays, by Malone. Johnſon and Steevens's laſt edit. vol. 1.

It has been inſidiouſly rumoured that Mr. Ireland claimed the MSS. in his poſſeſſion, as being lineally deſcended from the *friend* of Shakſpeare. I had the curioſity to aſk Mr. Ireland if ſuch a rumour were well founded, and received for anſwer, that ſo *abſurd* an idea never entered his mind, and had merely been circulated for the purpoſe of caſting an odium upon the MSS.

The term five pounds five ſhillings, in *Heming's* receipt, has been objected to, as not being then uſed in computation—how juſtly, will appear by the following *extracts*, from the collection of ordinances and regulations for the government of the Royal Houſehold from the reign of Edw. III. down to William and Mary, publiſhed by the Society of Antiquaries in 1790.

ELIZABETH.	£.	s.	d.
Page 255—Joyner's fee----	19	19	0
————Record———	16	16	8 &c.

Having thus purſued the "critical examina-" tion of the MSS." into all its branches; having ſcrupulouſly examined the evidence, *internal* and *external*, and weighed every objection *ſuperficial*, *literary*, and *chronological*, which has been adduced againſt them—I beg leave

leave to draw a few *general* concluſions from the *whole*, both with reſpect to the *MSS. themſelves*, and to the *manner* in which they have been *examined* by Mr. Boaden. On the latter point, it ſeems evident that the perſon who has ſo *violently oppoſed* their authenticity, is by *no means qualified* for the office he has undertaken.

With *no knowledge* of his ſubject (as it *afterwards* appeared in his pamphlet) he was originally *profuſe* in his commendation, and *officiouſly* deſirous of defending what *needed not* his feeble ſupport. With *equal raſhneſs* he *then* veered to the *oppoſite ſide*, and commenced an attack on what is far *ſuperior* to his hoſtility—Who, then, can *ſufficiently* admire that *ſagacity*, which *after two months* acquaintance with the MSS. could diſcover, that upon the *very ſurface*, their appearance and orthography were ſuch as to "*ſtartle* an *intelligent* obſerver." We are *amazed* at the *chronological accuracy* which, after long meditation in "the cloſet," found out diſcordances that *in fact* did not exiſt—but our aſtoniſhment is raiſed to it's *acme* on obſerving the deep *literary experience*, and *critical acumen*, which diſcovered the *ſame productions* to be at once animated with the genius of a Shakſpeare, and not to riſe *above* the ſtyle of "a methodiſt rhapſody." What *abſurdity* and *contradiction!*

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I ſincerely hope, however, that *theſe* were the *only defects of mind*, which gave birth to Mr. Boaden's Pamphlet. Ignorance is *excuſable*, but if a ſenſation of envious jealouſy, or malignant animoſity ſhould have dictated this *outrage* upon the *character* of Mr. Ireland, and upon the *productions* of *Shakſpeare*, it would merit not contempt, but the moſt perfect abhorrence! Of *this* the public muſt judge—and though they will laugh at the impotent effuſions of folly, they will treat with a *juſt indignation* the efforts of *calumny*—If Mr. Boaden's aim be that of *candid* criticiſm, and *fair* inveſtigation, *much* as he may have *erred*, he will eſcape ſevere animadverſion; but if *he* or any *other* perſon be found to have carried on an *inſidious hoſtility*, to have circulated *malicious* and *unfounded* reports, and to have inſtituted a *prejudiced* and *violent* oppoſition againſt the *liberal diſcuſſion* of the *ſubject*, their *actions* ſhould be repreſſed by the *interpoſition* of *authority*.

It has been reported that a party is now forming to obſtruct the juſt exerciſe of public judgment, in it's deciſion on the play of King Vortigern (whoſe merit or demerit it is impoſſible that *thoſe who have not* ſeen it can be *acquainted with*) by means of tumult and violence—ſhould ſuch an attempt, ſo baſe, ſo in-

ſulting to the underſtandings of a Britiſh audience, be made, it will no doubt be repelled by a generous indignation—and will recoil with ten-fold ſhame upon the heads of its inſtigators.

The juſtice, the *common juſtice*, due to Mr. Ireland, as an individual, is not in the caſe of this diſcovery, the only, nor perhaps the *chief point*.—It is the cauſe of Engliſh literature, the cauſe of genius and of truth, that is at ſtake! *They* are cloſely intereſted in the deciſion upon the MSS. and therefore the *lovers* of *them* will be anxious that the ſcrutiny ſhould be carried on *fully*, *but*, *fairly*—that no *arts* of *deluſion* ſhould be uſed to *prejudice* the *public mind*, but that *ignorance* ſhould be *detected* and *falſehood unmaſked*.

Although fully perſuaded of the *excellence* of the MSS. the author will not *preſume* to aſſert their *authenticity*, 'till they ſhall have *fully paſſed* the ordeal of *deep ſcientific* inveſtigation. In the interim, he cannot quit the ſubject without obſerving that they bear ſuch ſtrong marks of *truth* as cannot be *ſhaken* by *trifling* objections—it is the *characteriſtic* of impoſture to reſt its defence on *few points*, and on *them*, ſtudiouſly to *avoid diſcuſſion*—every ſource of *in-*

quiry is a ſource of doubt, and every ſtep in the progreſs of examination is intricate, perplexed, and uncertain. The *reverſe* is the characteriſtic of Mr. Ireland's conduct. The *variety* of the MSS. has given occaſion to *every ſpecies* of evidence, *each* of which has been *ſedulouſly* inveſtigated by all thoſe who were intereſted in their ſucceſs—*each proof* ſeemed to corroborate the others, and to give to the *whole* a ſpirit of conſiſtency and firmneſs ſcarcely ever attainable by falſehood.

FINIS.

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